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Another milestone

The 350,000th Holden has now come from the production lines of General Motors-Holden's. Behind that cold statistic is the warm story of achievement. It throws a spotlight on the remarkable growth of secondary industry in Australia.

The story begins just after World War II, when General Motors-Holden's began preparations for the production of an all-Australian car; a car designed specifically for Australian conditions. In November 1948, the car, with the name that has now become part of our language, was introduced. In May, 1953, the 100,000th Holden was produced and the production rate increased to cope with the demand. In February 1955, the 200,000 mark was passed.

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COMMENT

LIBERALISM TODAY

TO WRITE about liberalism is to enter a semantic maze. It includes at different turns everything from the most anarchic individualism to a planned social order managed a beneficent government. Still, through all its ambiguities d contradictions, the underlying theme is that liberalism itself the task of making men free and happy, negatively ridding them of the cramps of custom and tradition, and sitively by applying the latest results of philosophic reason d social science. In the nineteenth century the liberals made ir main effort the freeing of economic activity from state erference and ancient impediments. In the twentieth century ey began to look to the State as the chief agency for subduing oud capitalism to the general good.

But along this line the liberals found the socialists already possession with a more radical programme of curing the abuses private enterprise by abolishing it and substituting a tionalized planned economy. By the nineteen-thirties most of e liberal intellectuals in this country had been drawn into e position of camp-followers of socialism. Men were to be ade happy, or at least secure, by becoming dependants of the ate; a classless society was to be shaped by a uniform system education and the use of sociological and psychological chniques for producing enlightened personalities adjusted to e new order. Freedom was to consist in bringing all this about a nice way, without concentration camps or purges, with the ention of political democracy, and with a permissive attitude regards the expression of opinion, erotic experience, and e loosening of family ties.

Today liberalism of this type has become despondent and nfused. The contradiction inherent in the idea of a confiscatory gime which would make men free while destroying all bases independence was virtually acknowledged when the British bour Party drew back from the abyss of nationalization and gan casting around for a new programme. The retreat to a oderate government-regulated capitalism milked by taxation maintain a Welfare State is a disconsolate one, however mforting as a protection against immediate economic in-curity, because it solves the problems neither of productive terprise nor of personal happiness. There remains the spectacle

of a joyless and inhuman industrial society, of rootless masses of anxiety-ridden, neurotic and resentful individuals, of a squalid mass culture, of the boredom and depravity of urban civilization. The H-bomb obsesses people's minds, one may think, not only because of its actual destructive power, but also because it is a symbol of the inner explosive potentialities of a gathering nihilism and despair within modern society. Liberals are usually averse from taking seriously the darkness within man because their archetypal view of man is of a being transparent to scientific inquiry who is naturally good and easily perfectible by some rational re-arrangement of his circumstances. They have always been taken by surprise when modern history has erupted in outbursts of demoniac evil.

The most hopeful sign is that there has recently been some willingness to question whether the root failure of liberalism was not a mistaken idea of what human nature needs for freedom and happiness. Confident in its ideological prejudices, previous liberalism has tended to dissolve or undermine the community structure required for healthy personal growth. The attack on custom and tradition became a rancorous onslaught on the family, on property, on classes, on local particularities and autonomies, on churches, and on the ethical norms and sanctions embodied in these institutions. Modern society has tended to destroy those 'intermediate contexts' which Durkheim spoke of as intervening between the individual and the State. Liberals assisted this 'pulverizing and macadamizing tendency of modern history' deplored by Maitland, which reduces communities to a heap of alienated individuals without organic bonds, a 'lonely crowd', which is then pressured and schematized from above by vast industrial or business organizations or by the omnicompetent State. A liberalism which despises and attacks every social establishment whose ways cannot immediately be rationalized in terms of the latest social philosophy is dangerously lacking in respect for human reality. 'Release man from the contexts of community', says Robert A. Nisbet in his *The Quest for Community*, 'and you get not freedom and rights but intolerable aloneness and subjection to demoniac fears and passions.' This recognition is the point from which a more empirical and humane liberalism might start. It is not in the cult of an individualistic non-conformity for its own sake, such as a writer like David Riesman now proposes, that a mass society can win freedom, but in the growth of decentralized and self-regulating institutions in which free personalities are formed by the challenge of responsibility and meaningful action.

HUNGARY'S SECRET CONCENTRATION CAMP

György Kaposy

THE world shudders at the mention of horror camps like Dachau, Mauthausen or Buchenwald. But from what I know of these places they must have been rest homes ompared with the concentration camp at Recsk, in Hungary, here I spent more than two years.

My difficulties with the Communist authorities began in ecember 1949, when I was briefed as a public defender in the ial of a Piarist priest and four of his students. I was not engaged y private clients to appear for them, but was instructed to do by the Hungarian Bar Association. When I received my brief ttle did I suspect that in the end I, the defence counsel, would raw the heaviest penalty of the lot.

The case appeared to be simple and the charge against the ve accused looked rather childish. The four boys, all between irteen and sixteen, had found some rusty World War II rifles a garden. When it occurred to one of them to put the rifles some practical use, they decided to blow up the Soviet war onument in Budapest. This was a very puerile plan if you ealize the giant dimensions of the monument in question nd the uselessness of the obsolete rifles. The boys revealed their lan to their high-school teacher, Father Korcsiak. He, however, id not take them seriously and, brushing them off with a few arning words, forgot all about it. A few months later the ldest boy, aged sixteen, tried to escape from Hungary into ustria. The border guards caught him and thrashed him ntil the panic-stricken boy 'admitted' everything—including he childish plan to destroy the monument, which nobody had nown about. The sequel was the arrest of the priest and the oy's three school mates and their trial, at which they stood harged with 'armed conspiracy against the People's Democracy'. he prosecution demanded the death penalty for the priest nd severe punishment for the boys. When, after a few days' rial, Father Korcsiak received a jail sentence of only six years nd the boys a few months in a reformatory, I considered my wn role successful.

As events were shortly to prove, it was a trifle too successful. he same night, while I was in bed, someone knocked on the ront door. I opened the door and faced two civilians who asked

me, quite politely, to accompany them to the AVO Headquarters, where I would be needed to 'clarify' some little things. The whole thing would not take half an hour, they assured me, and I would be home by mid-night. That half-hour visit was longer than predicted. I returned home thirty-eight months later. When they took me away, my little daughter, Marianne, was three-and-a-half years old; when I was released, she did not recognize me.

At the AVO Headquarters I was treated from the very start as a dangerous criminal or worse. After some belting and vigorous kicking in the abdomen they asked me why I was there. But there was nothing I could reply and my silence further infuriated my interrogators who, four of them in turns, seemed rather to enjoy this lopsided sparring with me. The interrogation went on all night and towards the morning I was a complete physical wreck lying in a pool of blood. Finally, in desperation, I suggested to one of the AVO officers that if they gave me a blank piece of paper I would sign it at the bottom and they could type any 'confession' above it that they wanted. It reflects on their intelligence that, as it turned out, they could not invent anything incriminating to type above the signature I gave them and so, forty-eight hours later, the State Prosecutor was obliged to release me.

As I walked out of the building a few AVO officers were there waiting for me at the door. They grabbed me and took me back to where we started two days earlier. The same night I was sent to the Kistarcsa concentration camp with this cryptic entry in my file: 'Defended political and economic enemies of the State. His being at large is not desirable.'

Kistarcsa was a huge concentration camp which we thought dreadful and the last word in insanity and sadism. My prison number at Kistarcsa was over 70,000, which indicated the 'popularity' of this infamous punitive resort. The inmates had one thing in common: all had been branded as 'politically unreliable' by the Communists without trial.

At Kistarcsa we had 'co-education', as hundreds of women prisoners were also kept there. Women, on the whole, had a very tough time at Kistarcsa. It was the custom to interrogate them naked, trying not only to torture them but also to humiliate them. They were stripped, placed in front of powerful arc-lights and showered with icy water before questionings. Often their hands were tied to their feet and they were pulled up to the ceiling of a room by a rope for brutal beatings. As they had only women guards, the sexual aberrations in the women's

compound must belong to the realm of a psychiatrist in search of bizarre material. The sadistic women AVO guards stopped short of nothing to have 'fun' with their prisoners.

One thing which made our stay at Kistarcsa most unpleasant was the disturbing thought that, according to the 'laws' of Communist Hungary, internments have no time limit. Anyone, even a murderer when sent to jail, knows the time he has to serve and can expect to be out again in ten or twenty years. But a prisoner in a concentration camp has no such happy knowledge, and so the uncertainty of the duration of his internment in itself makes him half demented.

I was at Kistarcsa from December 1949 to January 1951, when they transferred me and a few hundred others to the newly opened camp at Recsk. I had never even heard of this place before and was not really frightened of things to come. I simply could not imagine that anything could be worse than Kistarcsa. But I was wrong.

Recsk is about seventy miles north-east of Budapest in the Matra mountains. This secret camp was opened in August 1950, mainly to make room for the overflowing population of Kistarcsa. Among those picked for Recsk were prominent anti-bolshevists and social democrats who were grouped together by the Reds as their arch enemies.

We arrived at the railway station of Recsk shortly after 4 a.m., and were immediately ordered to quick march towards Recsk proper. It was terribly cold, and the road was covered with frozen snow and ice. The camp was five miles away and we had to reach it in two hours to avoid the attention of farm people living nearby. Of the six hundred men in the march seventeen found this too much and died either on the road from exhaustion or later as a result of pneumonia.

The camp itself, as the next few days showed, was prepared with thoroughness. There was a double wire around it and beyond that were the forests. However, just outside the wires the earth was shaved off clean, making a sudden dash into the forests difficult. At a distance of fifty yards from each other were watch-towers with machine guns; the guards were changed at every four hours to keep them alert. The timber huts were originally built for one hundred men each, but they packed two hundred into them. They had no flooring and so we had to tramp on the earth inside which, in the snowy and rainy months, turned into quagmires. On two sides of the hut were two rows of 'beds' against the wall, built high like the sleepers of Pullman cars. They were not really beds at all, but plain timber shelves.

We had to get up at 5 a.m. and sit down for 'breakfast' ten minutes later. As Recsk was always short of water, the prisoners were encouraged to skip the conventional early morning wash and shave. Breakfast consisted of half-a-pint of watery, lukewarm soup. Lunch was more generous: we used to receive three-quarters of a pint of soup, cooked vegetables and, twice a week, what was humorously called meat. This was a couple of pieces of unchewable fat and bones which even a particularly hungry dog would have refused; but we ate it. For dinner either the soup or the vegetables were repeated (whichever was left over in the kitchen). Add to this just over one pound of bread for the day and you get a total of about 900 calories—roughly 35 per cent. of what an adult needs.

This diet would have been badly insufficient even if we had been allowed to stay in the huts all day and rest. However, we had to work. Straight after breakfast we were escorted up into the stonemine where we worked from 6 a.m. to midday. For this job we had two implements, neither up to the task: picks and rods. The mine was on the side of a mountain slope in rugged country where mere balancing was difficult, let alone working. When the stones were loosened, often a small avalanche started from the top, hurtling stones down into the valley. There was hardly a day without accidents, even fatal ones.

After 12 noon we were rushed back to the camp for the lunch hour, each trip taking about 20 minutes' walk. Dishing out was slow every day, so that many had simply no time even to wait for their meagre supply of food, but had to hasten back to the mine with an empty stomach. Work started again at 1 p.m. and went on uninterrupted until 9 p.m.; fourteen hours a day and eight hours on Sundays.

The real spectacle of the day came at night, after 9 p.m. when, back from the stonemine, we had to line up in our huts to receive our dinner. We had just enough time to place the plates on our beds before an AVO officer appeared for a roll-call and inspection. As most of these officers were semi-illiterates, the mere reading of two hundred names and the ticking off his list often took him up to two hours. If he made a mistake in the numbers he started all over again. As soon as he had finished, the officer went out of the hut, locked the door and switched off the lights. The two hundred of us were stranded in the middle of the hut in total darkness, still dressed up, often in wet clothes. We had to find our place and our soup which, by then, had invariably turned into a cold, scummy, nauseating liquid. Dozens upset their plates or someone else's, spilling the

soup over the beds and clothes. Then they went to sleep hungry as well as wet through.

The process of sleeping under these abnormal conditions was also rather complicated. In winter we discarded our overcoats and boots but kept everything else on in the bitter, biting cold which often was 20°F. below freezing. However, no one froze to death, mainly because we were so close to each other that the densely packed bodies kept reasonably warm.

The only doctor in the camp was a fellow-prisoner who had to fix broken limbs and ribs as best he could without drugs and bandages and plaster. He was Count János Hoyos, a prominent and fashionable surgeon from Budapest. Count Hoyos did everything that was humanly possible to relieve pains and cure diseases with only two things at his disposal: iodine and gauze. The Count himself was rather unlucky to get to Recsk. In Budapest he had a well-established practice, his patients including many American and British diplomats and their families. In one of the many anti-western purges Count Hoyos was arrested and charged with being an 'American spy'. If an internee fractured his right arm, he was out of work until it healed. He was also down to half rations. However, if it was the left arm it was put into a sling and next morning he had to go back into the mine, working one-handed.

Although no figures had ever been released by any source, we estimated that up to July 1953 about five hundred people had died at Recsk because of the brutal treatment and the insufficient diet, and in stone avalanches at the mine.

For those who did not die and seemed to be the hardy types the ingenious AVO guards had something special in store. They had a few prison cells built under the ground which we used to call 'coffins'. One of these was about 5 feet 3 inches high, wide and deep, making it impossible either to stand or lie down. The only way to spend the time was to bend over or kneel down. Complete darkness in the 'coffin' added to the miseries of the prisoner, as he could never tell whether it was day or night. In this solitary the diet consisted of only one meal in two days, the Communists claiming, with the wisdom of their dialectical materialism, that those who don't work don't have to eat. Another kind of special cell was 5 feet 3 inches high, 1 foot 4 inches wide and deep. In this one was allowed to stand only in a stooped way. Sitting down was punished by beatings with truncheons. I once stood in that cell for 30 hours. In the next 'coffin' was a man called Purgl whose crime was that he was the brother-in-law of ex-Regent Horthy.

At Recsk, in contrast to Kistarcsa, we were not allowed visitors. By a complete ban on visitors and letters the Communists tried to make Recsk non-existent for the rest of the world. In this they succeeded for a long time. Not until the October Revolution did the existence of this horror camp become generally known. Our isolation was so thorough and hermetic that for more than a year my family had not known whether I was alive or dead.

In March 1951, a young boy from Miskolc we called 'Puma' and I started a hunger strike in a desperate attempt to improve our food. In the first two days we complained of stomach upsets when refusing our meals but on the third day we were called in front of an AVO officer. He glanced at us and, pleased with his shrewdness, exclaimed: 'Hunger strike, Comrades?' Before I could admit it or deny it, someone from behind knocked me down and I fainted. When they woke me up with some cold water my head was split open and felt as if a train had run through it.

Without further ceremony they placed me in one of the smaller calibre 'coffins' for a few days to 'think it over'. The second interview did not go so smoothly. I was first beaten up by three AVO men, then knocked down to the floor. One of the guards then took careful aim as if my head had been a soccer ball and kicked me right in the mouth. Ten of my teeth from the upper gum flew out. At the same time, so as not to be bored, another guard started to pull off two of my fingernails and after persevering for ten minutes succeeded. I still bear the marks of both episodes. When this 'interrogation' was over, I was carried back to my 'coffin' where I spent the next three days meditating, without food. It took me about a month to recover, helped by my hut-mates who gave me portion of their meagre meals.

What sort of men were at Recsk and what was their crime? Of the twelve hundred prisoners in my time only one was what may be described as an ordinary criminal. The poor fellow had committed the unpardonable sin of breaking into railway waggons that carried reparation goods to Russia. Because of his folly he was classified as an 'enemy of the Soviet Union' and not as a simple, down-to-earth, everyday burglar. All other prisoners were there for 'political' or 'economic' crimes.

Some had quite a story to tell. Take Hugo Koch, for example, a placid, middle-aged engineer who had never done anything in his life that would have called for a term at Recsk. Yet he got it. A woman employee from the factory where Koch was engineer

in charge planned to get married and Koch was delegated by the 'works committee' to represent the factory at the wedding. This was to take place in the village of Kistarcsa, a couple of miles from the concentration camp. Koch took a taxi from Budapest and rather enjoyed the prospect of a pleasant day. On their way to Kistarcsa in one of the bends a limousine was coming fast from the opposite direction. Koch's taxi driver had just enough time to swerve and avoid a head-on collision. However, he could not possibly notice that behind the limousine came another big car and, with brakes screaming, they just touched together before coming to a halt. Half-a-dozen men jumped out of the first limousine—and Mátyás Rákosi from the second. After 'establishing' the facts Rákosi ordered that the driver be released. But Koch, who had nothing to do with the incident apart from being a passenger, was arrested. He spent five years at Kistarcsa and Recsk on the charge of 'an attempt on the life of Comrade Rákosi'.

A well-known Hungarian poet, whose Villon translations are classics in Hungarian literature, was also at Recsk. He was György Faludy, a Social Democrat almost since childhood. He was sent to Recsk because in one of his articles he failed to observe the 'party line'.

Another interesting case was that of Dr Elemér Kund, a high-ranking government official in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In 1944 Kund was deported to Mauthausen as a royalist. However, he survived and after the war returned to Budapest. In 1951 Kund was taken to Recsk with exactly the same charge: for being a royalist. He was over seventy when I met him. The poor old chap always referred to his months in the German concentration camp as 'the good old times'.

Dr Loránt Somóczy, one of the very few Hungarians ever to receive the French Légion d'Honneur, was one of my hut-mates. Dr Somóczy, a prosecutor at the Budapest Supreme Court, was interned because he had failed to demand the death sentence in a big 'window-trial'.

Another internee, Army officer Jozsef Sármány, was the brother-in-law of General György Pálfy who, in the famous Rajk trial, drew a death sentence and was executed. Sármány told me behind-the-scenes facts about the Rajk trial which, in 1949 and again in 1956, received so much publicity in the world press. I believe that his story may throw fresh light on not only the trial itself but also on all other window-trials which occur from time to time in all Communist countries. By a strange coincidence, one of the principal characters in the Rajk trial

was also at Recsk and he later confirmed just about every detail Sármány had told me about him.

László Rajk, former Communist Minister of Interior, was arrested in the spring of 1949 together with Andras Szalai, Communist Party leader, General György Pálfy and a few others. The same day they were visited in their cells by Party boss Rákosi and a few others, who explained to their bewildered comrades what it was all about. The arrests, Rajk and his colleagues were told, were only camouflage. It was aimed to deceive the Western world about the strength of the Communist Party and to divert the attention of the Hungarian people from burning issues. For these reasons they would arrange a show trial, Rákosi explained, and asked Rajk to co-operate by taking the part of the accused. Rajk was told that they would be informed in due course what to say at the trial and what crimes to admit. Also, any sentence they would receive was not important, as they would be shifted to Russia where they could live in luxury while the people thought they were in jail. Rajk and his fellow prisoners were not treated like enemies but like friends. Everything seemed to be on the level—at least, on the weird Communist level.

In the meantime an intensive campaign was started in the Budapest Party press against Tito and Titoists, including Rajk, who, however, knew nothing about this. Rákosi and his fellow conspirators got hold of an elderly man called Tibor Boros who, between 1920 and 1944, had served as a detective. He was in jail at Vác where he was serving time for 'Horthyist activities' —an unspecific charge under which the whole of Hungary could have been convicted. Boros was told that if he agreed to take a certain part in the trial he would be released. The old, much-suffering man agreed. He was immediately given a private room in the jail and supplied with first-rate food, old brandy and Havana cigars. At the same time his coaching for his role began. They held several rehearsals with Boros, most of them in an empty court room so that he would get used to the surroundings. An AVO officer occupied the chair of the judge and, holding a copy of the script in his hand like a radio actor, asked Boros the questions he had been taught to answer.

'Do you remember Szalai?' was the first question. Boros had to pretend that he was thinking hard. 'No, I don't,' he had to reply. 'Come closer please,' the script asked for next. 'Have a look at this photograph. Do you recognize him?' Boros was taught to act as a dramatic actor; pull his forehead and say

slowly, with deep conviction: 'Yes . . . that's him. This is Szalai.' Boros then had to relate how Szalai in the nineteen-thirties, while pretending to be a Communist Party member, acted as a police informer, passing on to him confidential information about the activities of illegal Communist cells.

Rajk and his fellow prisoners still did not know about these clandestine preparations, and appeared to be quite cheerful even on the eve of their trial. They believed that they were serving the party by admitting their guilt in small, almost disciplinary, matters and then, as a reward, would get not only their freedom back but also a trip to Russia. Even a Lenin Order was not out of the question, so they thought. The rest is history. Rajk and the others were convicted of high treason and executed. Not until the very last moment did they realize that they had been cunningly and elaborately deceived.

Detective Boros played his part well at the trial, and was largely instrumental in making the prosecution's story plausible. After the trial he was released from the prison of Vác, as promised. However, he was not allowed to go free but was taken at once to Recsk to prevent him from talking to anyone in the outside world about the case.

The concentration camp at Recsk closed down in 1953, mainly because of Stalin's death and the subsequent 'go easy' policy of Communist parties in Eastern Europe. Nearly everybody who was alive—about five hundred out of the twelve hundred inmates when I arrived—was then released, including myself. So secret was the camp that even then my release paper was issued as from Kistarcsa camp. After returning to my family I got work first as a labourer and subsequently as a legal officer. After taking part in the October rising I got out of Hungary with my family and came through Austria and Italy to Australia.

Since the October Revolution Recsk has opened its gates again. I don't know how many people now enjoy its hospitality, and I don't know what is going on behind the barbed wire, but I can guess.

György Kaposy

On Muscovite Imperialism

Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw,
But harden'd back whene'er the morning's raw;
With no objection to true liberty,
Except that it would make the nations free.

Byron, THE AGE OF BRONZE

"The bubble reputation . . ."

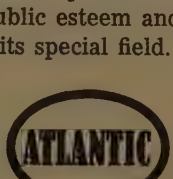
Everywhere the ardent disciples of the Gospel of Self-expression pursue the rewards of personal distinction and reputation—in art, in letters, in the drama, and in sport.

That is as it should be in a free world.

Some ultimately achieve fame by sheer native brilliance, others by the tireless labours of self-development. But experience shows that those who retain a place in public favour longest are those who attain it with qualities of character as well as with distinctive performance. This, too, is as it should be.

Today and tomorrow—as with yesterday—it is integrity, probity and dependability which are the strongest threads in the fabric of lasting success in any field.

It is a lively awareness of this truth which has led the Atlantic Union Oil organisation to pattern all its activities on a basis of complete dependability—right from its very beginning in Australia more than a quarter of a century ago. And it is this spirit of commercial integrity and fair-dealing, backed by the best in petroleum products that oil-research could devise, which has kept the Atlantic organisation high in public esteem and maintained it as a leader in its special field.



Atlantic Union Oil Company Pty. Limited

THE SONG OF THE NARRANGUY

Brian James

IN THE singing of many little rivers, the song of the Narranguy persists the clearest, and I hear it now as I write this. The Narranguy came out of the dawn and the great dark mysterious ranges and circled and looped its way by the little hills to the setting of all the suns. Our place was set on the rising ground just above the rich black river flats. 'Riverview', father had called it: from our front verandah we saw so much of the river and the river country, and it all became, without our knowing it, a very big part of ourselves. Also, if we looked to the left, we could see something of the ranges, with Coolangubra rising above them, a giant among giants. He watched continually over us in his frowning dominance and majesty, in all ways like the god who lived once a week in our catechism. Bleak and black against the rising day, he was; but he caught the last of its going. And then he smiled, distantly, a trifle grimly; but for the moment his great face lit up in a smile, and that somehow reconciled us a little to the awful Deity who so pitilessly watched our lives. Occasionally, too, the great bow or double bow, after the violence of a summer storm, would be fully bent in all its beauty and glory right over Coolangubra. And that gave us a glimpse of the Heaven reserved for us—if we were very good—in some impossibly distant future.

Mother was romantic; even six children hadn't cured her of that, as it does most women long since. As we grew a bit older and she should have been gloomily instructing us, the girls anyway, in the facts of life, and getting us to adjust ourselves in the correct modern gloomy fashion, and teaching us that life was a pretty gloomy affair anyhow, she wasted many an hour, when the mood was on her, in painting life in bright colours. Ah well, she didn't prate of Security, for she seemed to find life more interesting without it. Not that she was feckless or lazy or improvident either: but she knew how to clip from time the golden moments. And she was always singing scraps of the old songs, lovely songs we thought they were: 'Sweet Belle Mahone', 'Prairie Flower', 'The Land of the Leal', 'White Wings', and 'What are the Wild Waves Saying?'

Father was very different from mother. A very quiet man and full of reserves where she was so voluble. Very patient—easy-going, was the expression. Sometimes he would tell us stories

round the fire at night—when he was in the mood: old stories they were, well worn, graduating, as we grew older, from fairies, giants, ogres, to smugglers and so forth. Or he read to us—Fenimore Cooper, Jane Porter, Bunyan, and even Mark Twain. And often, too, he told us stories from the Old Testament. He certainly had an eye for a good story and he told it well. We never tired of Joseph and Abraham and Ruth and Daniel. Perhaps we liked more than any of them Pharaoh's pursuit of the Children of Israel—what time the mighty host was swallowed up by the Red Sea. It had a local setting and application: 'You see,' father would say, 'it was just as if Pharaoh was right in the middle of the old Narranguy, at the crossing before there was a bridge at all, and down comes the river with a rush.' It certainly did make it all very real.

Father was much less enjoyable on Sunday afternoon. For after dinner he lined us up and 'went through our catechisms'. He'd ask the questions and we had to give the answers. Not a paraphrase either—he insisted on our being word perfect. In any case, a paraphrase was mostly impossible for, as like as not, we hadn't the faintest notion what it was all about. Father's theory apparently was that the meaning would come to us all right some day, and then we'd be very glad. All the years have not yet brought the gladness.

But life at 'Riverview', with a few definite drawbacks, was a happy one and a fair proportion of the good sunlight fell upon us. Time flowed on, inexorably though we knew it not, like the water of the Narranguy—under the bridge, singing its song as it went, on to the west. Never to come back any more.

There had been a drought all that summer. Eaglehawks floated as specks in the hard blue of the sky, or described their wide and endless circles; never before so many crows, dreary crowds of them, black as Satan, sinister choruses, hark-harking at the drought and its spoils: dusty, bony, skinny cattle moving in listless mobs from somewhere to the shelter of the river country. The tanks at our place went dry—the two round tanks and the two square tanks—and we carted water from the river for household use; or rather we dragged it up on the sled. The Narranguy was a mere thread now, a trickle only, and all its old time murmuring, its song and croon had gone. No one had ever seen the river so low—not even the old hands. And then it stopped flowing altogether—that more than anything made the drought a fearsome thing.

Then fires broke out in the ranges and filled the air with smoke by day; and by night there were a thousand twinkling

ghts to mock the pale stars. Even Coolangubra, so aloof and tately, was burning: Coolangubra whose final peak had been o often sifted over with snow. And now on fire! It was the end f the world, and the world was burning up. 'No man knows,' aid the catechism of this event. But here it was now—con-ummation, and the dreaded general judgment was at hand.

One night when summer had shaded into unnatural autumn—or there was no harvest; no fulfilment—a voice from the past, rom the dead, called to us. From under the stand of the back ank came the croak of old grandfather frog, as we used to call im. A confident and prophetic croak. God knows how grand-ather had survived all those months. But there he was in the larkness croaking away. 'Drought done'—he said as plain s could be. 'I believe him,' said father, 'there is rain coming.'

Grandfather was right. Next day clouds piled up in the north-vest, and filled all the sky and sat on the top of Coolangubra; nd all the air was still and hushed, listening for the forgotten atter of rain drops, waiting for the smell of wetted dust. And hat night it began to rain, lightly and shyly. The wetted dust melled sweet. Grandfather frog reproved our former doubts. Said so,' he croaked.

The rain grew heavier, ever so gradually. But it made music n the iron roof now. There was the laughter and gurgle of alling water in the empty tanks. Mother had made us come in—No use getting soaked,' she said. And we danced and sang n the sheer relief of purgatory done with.

We went to bed with the rain drumming heavily in our ars. There was no deception about it, no false alarm. When ve woke in the morning there was still the heavy drumming n the galvanized iron. It was a 'real set in'. The grey light ame grudgingly from the hidden sun. All the tanks were full, nd the two round ones were spurting great arcs from their verflows. Heavy splash of unwanted water. Water everywhere—he whole world turning to water.

Father and Jack, in long-unused oilskins, slopped through he falling rain and the puddles and mud to feed the horses and ows. The hungry fowls came right to the back verandah to eg. We laughed at the sight of them, so dejected looking they vere with tails depressed.

We didn't go to school that day—for once father said we'd ave to stay home. We grew tired of the tedious hours. Even the owls, sad and solemn as they looked, were having a better ime. And we wondered, too, what the old Narranguy was doing about all the rain. And in the midst of the wondering

we heard him. Yes, we heard him. A heavy booming that rose above the monotonous beating upon the roof. It was quite exciting to hear the river, and not a little terrifying.

Ted, second youngest and nearly two years older than myself, and I managed to sneak off down the lane. We had corn bags over us made into hoods and capes. It was great to be out of the house. We squelched through mud and went knee deep at times through the sheets of water. And then the river. From bank to bank, nearly over-brimming them, was this great monster, yellow and grey, tearing along. We stood on the bridge now, and from its safety looked upon this fearsome thing that thrilled us so. And so close beneath us. Grey tumult. Splotches of yellow foam—like islands, only they shot along and made us dizzy to watch them. We ventured further along, to the very middle of the bridge, and then we felt it jar and quiver and tremble. Some big object, no doubt a huge log, had bumped against one of the supports. And the whole bridge trembled. It wasn't safe any more.

'Come on,' said Ted daringly, 'to the other end.'

'Back,' I said.

'Afraid!' said Ted.

'Afraid—what of?' No younger brother can own fear when an older brother taunts him. And Ted and I raced to the far end. There was now the whole length of bridge between us and home. I strove hard to beat back the trembles within myself, and that queer vacant feeling that assails one at the top of the stomach. I daresay Ted was much in the same way. After all, he was only twelve. But then I was only just ten.

We had enough sense to realize that, if the bridge was unsafe—and we knew now in our very bones that it was unsafe—the sooner we recrossed the better it was for us. We got our breaths again—and took one look at the tumbling waves, bigger than ever. The whole flooring of the bridge would soon be awash.

'Off we go!' said Ted. Fear put springs in our feet. There was no doubt about it—the bridge was rocking. Not trembling, but rocking. We flew—unconscious of the pains and stitches that must have been in our sides. Nor did we look any more at the flood. I stumbled and fell, sprawled out yards ahead of the stumble. This was *It*—the very end of everything. I could hear mother singing 'Wait for me at Heaven's gate, sweet Belle Mahone'; and father, with the steel-rim spectacles on his nose, asking so severely 'What is sanctifying grace?' . . . Ted slowed down while I bounced to my feet again. 'All right?' he gasped. And as my feet bounded away I managed, 'I'm all right.'

We did reach our side—heaving and puffing, sucking in the air that wouldn't fill the emptiness within. 'A narrow squeak, that was,' said Ted at last. I felt then, and know now, that Ted was bitterly disappointed that the whole bridge didn't crash before our eyes, dissolve and be no more, now we were safe!

And then out of the dull curtain of the rain, came father. 'Hey, you fellows, what do you think you're doing?' Anxiety, tempered with relief, was in his voice. He had been out looking for us, and should have been angry at finding us. But he wasn't —he must have been mortally afraid for us. We had to admit having been on the bridge.

'Come along,' said father, 'your mother is dreadfully upset —thinking all kinds of terrible things have happened to you.' Then he noticed my knee. 'What on earth have you done to your leg?' For the first time I felt the pain of it. There was a big gash—the mark of it is still there.

'I fell, I think.'

'On the bridge, of course.' And father made me ride pick-a-back, despite demurring on my part. Even that made the wounded leg worth while.

Mother cleansed the gash on my knee with 'karroseen', a universal remedy then, and bound it neatly with clean rag strips. And cooed and clucked and scolded and fussed. Which showed how afraid she had been for us, too. After all, our greatest fears are for others. In the ultimate we can face fate for ourselves, steel and nerve ourselves to it; but we can't quite do that for others—for those we really love. Then the coward in us reveals himself. We didn't know that then, but we do now. We do now.

And it still rained. And rained. Ted was saying, 'Forty days and forty nights,' grinning to show how funny he thought it. Mother said it wasn't nice to joke about the Scriptures. No doubt we were all scared, Ted as much as any of us. Towards evening there was a great crash and a ripping and rending. 'That,' said father, 'is the bridge. There won't be a stick of it left.'

Morning, and still raining. We looked out, and there was the flood right at our door, for all our living on a slope that overlooked the flats. Quiet water this. Quiet and deadly in purpose. No tumbling waves in it. It ran slowly the other way. And that puzzled us greatly in our fears. Father told us it was a backwater, but how and why we didn't understand. Father also assured us that the house was safe—we needn't worry about that. I could see he didn't quite believe it himself. Ted didn't say anything more about Noah and the ark.

Father warned us to stay inside. He and Jack went out to look after the stock. They came back and said all was well, and that the rain was starting to ease up. And even then a small patch of pale and washed out blue showed in the north-west. But it was sky. There *was* sky behind the low clouds, however hard it was to believe it. The blue patch winked and disappeared and the rain went on. But it wasn't so heavy now.

Young Eric Martin, the first outsider we had seen for days, appeared on the back verandah. We hailed him gladly therefore, though at school we didn't like him much. A big fellow, well over thirteen, on whom with a deal of malicious satisfaction we had bestowed the name 'Turkey Eggs' on account of his freckles.

Ted said, 'By cripes, Eric, the bridge is gone.'

'I know, Ted, we heard it go. You didn't see it, did you?' His voice was curiously low and strained.

'No, but Jim here and I crossed it just before she went. All wobbley she was then, I can tell you.'

Mother came out of the kitchen. She was very fond of boys, all sorts of boys. Mothers who are always singing, as she was, mostly are. The sour sort cling to the daughters, so we used to think—perhaps a kind of feminine conspiracy against Man. Be that as it may, mother had a very sympathetic understanding of boys. She summed up Eric now at a glance. 'What's wrong, Eric?' she asked.

And Eric broke down and blubbered, great bubbles of weeping coming through a narrow necked bottle, as it were. Not much of tears either, except through his nose, which he restrained by great intaking sniffs.

'There, there,' said mother, patting the huge fellow on the shoulders. 'There, there! You're out of wind—get your breath and tell us.'

'It's father!' This came up and out with a very big bubble.

'Yes, yes,' said mother anxiously and paling a little. 'What is it, Eric?'

'He's gone!'

'Gone!'

'We can't find him, and he hasn't come back.'

'Run over,' said mother to Ted, 'and get father.'

It took a long time for Eric to tell the tale. It seemed that Mr Martin had gone to shift some cows from a paddock.

'On foot was he, Eric?'

'No, he was riding Nellie. And she's gone, too.'

And that was hours ago. They had waited and waited. And he didn't come back. They went down to the edge of the water.

Some of the cows were on the higher slopes of the next paddock. And some were missing. No sign of them, nor of Mr Martin. Nor of Nellie either.

Father had heard enough. 'I'll be coming across, lad,' he said. 'And Jack, too.'

Early evening was falling. Rain certainly lighter now, but a kind of fog with it. And the booming of the river and a gentle mocking lap-lap of water at the front of the house.

'Do be careful,' said mother as father and Jack and Eric set out. And to Eric—'Never fear, he's all right.'

Then she had a quiet cry herself, and made herself busy and bossy to hide it. She had us pile up a great fire in the wide kitchen fireplace. 'They'll be soaked and frozen,' she said, 'when they get back.' Then she made us kneel down and say prayers, specifying for God's convenience and better understanding what the prayers were for: for father and Jack; that Mr Martin turned up all right; that the rain would stop; that the water would come no higher; and that we didn't lose too many head of stock. Lastly that the fences didn't get washed away. I think she had the turkeys in mind, too, but didn't like to worry God too much.

Mother got the long black fork and told Ted to make toast—there were lovely coals now, simply inviting toast. 'Watch it,' she said, 'and don't let it burn.' I assisted—largely in the capacity of critic. Ted was a realist which meant, like most realists, he was morbid. Cheerfully morbid he was. Our adventure on the bridge had greatly stimulated his realism.

'He's a gonner, I reckon,' said Ted.

'Who, Mr Martin?'

'Sure. And as like as not they won't find him for days and days. Sometimes they never do at all, you know.'

I shivered. Ted went on. 'And when they do they're horrible. All puffed up and hard to know—except by buttons and pipe and pocket knife . . . And such like things . . .'

Mother returned just then and heard the tail-end of Ted's prophecy for Mr Martin. 'Not another word like that,' she said—fiercely for mother.

The hours went by. Mother was just on the point of sending up a new lot of petitions, and a reminder of the old ones, to the Lord, when Ted announced, 'Here they come, I do believe! Someone's coming! And the water's under the front of the house.' We all went out to the side of the back verandah and joined Ted. A weird sort of light came from the gloom—an uncertain light that bobbed and jerked, grew big and grew

small, came close and receded. And around it a vague, luminous sphere. Voices. It was father and Jack, with a hurricane lamp, skirting the grey limitless sea of the Narranguy.

'Did you find him?' called Ted. Father didn't answer; he only gave a look and a shrug to mother. We understood that it was all up with Mr Martin. 'Oh dear!' said mother. 'And did you . . .'

'We didn't,' said father. 'And there's not a hope. He's gone. We'll be lucky ever to find him now.'

'Miles and miles lower down, and days after—like that Chinaman at Wellington . . .' Ted's prophecies evidently derived from an old newspaper account of a big fresh in the Macquarie and the drowning of a Chinaman.

Father and Jack were very wet and cold, and father was much dejected. Mr Martin was a close friend. Mother hustled and bustled and gave them steaming cups of tea. She was a great believer in tea. Tea ran a very close second to prayers as a comforter. Better sometimes, for tea was never a complete failure. Then she got them something to eat.

'And how is she—poor thing?' asked mother.

'Pretty badly—naturally. And calm enough, too, if you understand.'

Mother understood. 'I must go over and see her,' she said.

'A long way round now, and not very nice going either. Wait till morning, I'd say.'

'No, tonight.' And she got herself ready.

Father had the trip over again with mother, and Jack was to stay with us. He sent us to bed and sat up late himself.

The sun was actually shining next morning when we woke up. Very much watered down sunlight it was. But the rain had stopped, and there was a very pale blue sky. Like someone's eyes we knew once—awful weak eyes, with the blue of them nearly white, and the white nearly as blue. And the water had dropped a little overnight below the gate. But the river was still a raging sea, miles wide, and the hills seemed to have got farther away. There was more water than land. That was the view in front. Behind, Coolangubra and the high ranges stood out—not so sharply defined now, but triumphant.

Word had gone round somehow that Mr Martin was missing. Neighbours, men and young fellows, dropped into our place. Father was looked to for leadership in the community.

The search for the missing man was simple and restricted. Ted and I were not allowed to go—and after Ted's talk of finding the body I was secretly glad. There was just one chance—that

Martin might be brought in by a backwater somewhere. Well over a mile downstream, the river tore at the hills that came on to the left bank; but on the right was a great stretch of slightly calmer water, covering what had been paddocks of corn and lucerne. It was here that they found Martin—at least what seemed to be he. A quick eye detected a something caught in the lower branches of a river gum, just above the water. The gum itself was one of a scattered group of dumpy green islands, for the tree trunks were all under water. The something was a man, wedged in a fork, slumped, with feet and legs in the water. Dead or unconscious, for there was no response to hail and shout. It must be Martin, washed into the tree most likely, caught by the branches and jammed there.

How to rescue him? There were no boats—not on the Narranguy—and it was nearly two hundred yards out to that tree. All kinds of suggestions were made—ropes, rafts, logs, but none of them were practicable. Father studied the current carefully. 'We can reach him all right,' he said. 'That is not the big difficulty. It's getting him to shore.' He looked hard again. 'But one could use the current and slant across to somewhere about Tully's. What do you think?'

That was all very well, but who could undertake such a swim? Not a few hundred yards, it might be a mile. More perhaps. And all the risks of the swift current and the flood's fearful harvest of driftwood and debris. Still, there were volunteers, too—not such good swimmers either. Father turned them down. He himself was by far the best swimmer along the Narranguy. In fact, of all present he was the only one likely to succeed. 'I'll give it a flutter,' he said, 'and I feel sure I can do it.'

'Look, Tom,' said old man George to father, 'if you wait a few hours the river will drop. Wait, I say.'

'He may be alive now and dead then,' said father.

He gave instructions to the party to wait lower down—at least four hundred yards and farther, and to keep a good lookout. He himself would enter the water a few hundred yards upstream. He made it seem not so hard after all.

'Your own wife and kids, you know,' said old man George. 'Is it fair to them?' Apparently this nettled father somewhat. 'Charlie,' he remarked, 'I am the only man here who can do this. Could I face the wife and kids again if I didn't try to do it?' I can't doubt now that there was more than a touch of the melodramatic in all this. But father was a brave man too, and it's good to think that he was. Old Charlie George gave it up with a shrug. 'All right, Tom. All right, and good luck.'

Father waded out as far as he could—heavens, but the water must have been cold! Then he struck out at a slant across that powerful current. There were many obstacles in his way, and bigger than they seemed from the shore: floating stuff that had to be avoided, travelling downstream faster than father.

One large mass of debris hove down upon him when he was close to the big gum where Martin was. No doubt it was right upon him before he noticed it. It seemed to go over him entirely, they said. And partly turn over too. For a moment, they said, father was seen to struggle against it, and then he disappeared. And the floating snag, whatever it was, passed on.

But there was no longer any sight of father.

'Christ!' said old man George. 'He's under it! Caught and tangled in it! Barb wire in it perhaps, or wire netting. Christ, but what did I tell him! Tangled up and caught!'

They watched the spot where he had disappeared, but father didn't show up. They watched the mass of rubbish swiftly floating on, but no sign of father in that either. Not a sign, and no one could know exactly what had happened. But not a soul could do a thing about it. That treacherous moving island, dancing and bobbing a deal in the stream, moved on, now caught by some cross current, to stop and circle a moment, and then on again—farther out than before.

As simply—and as uselessly—as that it happened.

They followed down on the right bank till they came to the junction of the Narranguy and Bluett's Creek. The creek was a river now itself—fifty yards wide at least, and swifter than the river. There was no crossing it, even if there had been any use in doing so.

So that was that. If there was any hope for Mr Martin, jammed and caught in the river gum, there was none at all for father.

At last they gathered together again, full of unspoken guilt. They had witnessed tragedy, stood by and seen it, and had been powerless to avert it. Only old man George voiced his thought—'He shouldn't, you know, but he went like a man.'

There were still small straws to clutch—to save themselves. 'Charlie,' someone said, 'we'll have to tell her.' And that meant there was no one so fitting as old George to do it. There are men, of course, who don't mind breaking the news, the bad news. Some have even a horrible relish in doing it. Many more women enjoy it still more. But this little crowd shrank from it. There was no gleam of credit for them in it.

'All right,' said old man George. 'I'll do it.' He selected some of the older men to go with him. 'But,' he said stubbornly,

"I'm not taking his clothes. I can't face her with them. Do something with them till later on. It wouldn't be decent now.' I think old man George must have wept over those empty clothes on the bank.

And so he came to our place and broke the news; and from his account, and from those of others later on, I tell this tale of the last of father in the Big Flood. The river to this day has never given him up. Buried somewhere, farther down, beneath the silt and mud, or caught for ever in the reedy swamps. We never learned where, but there he sleeps.

The river went down rapidly after the rain ceased. It almost seemed as if the flood had been waiting for father. And now that it had him it subsided. Coolangubra, progenitor of the river and flood, was no great distance from us, so the water got away quickly. Very soon they were able to get out to the big gum with Mr Martin in it. High up, caught tightly in the branches, in a nest of rubbish and mud. And he wasn't dead either, though nearly as good as dead. Terribly knocked about—to say nothing of what the doctor called shock and exposure. But still alive. And he lived, broken and crippled. Worse off really than father.

Mother took it well—how much it was to her we couldn't know. But she said it was God's will, and that God knew best. Great faith, it seems, can only go with great optimism. For a long time we didn't hear her sing—not very much. And then in more plaintive note—'The Land of the Leal' over and over. And scraps of hymns—over and over too. Otherwise busy and cheerful as ever. A wonderful woman, she was. It's largely, I suppose, a matter of what one is born to be.

Ted, poor Ted, was completely cured of his romantic fallacies, or morbidness, or whatever it was. We never heard him mention again that Chinaman who was drowned in the Macquarie.

Floods and droughts have followed each other down the years. Cycles, they call them, with ordinary seasons in between. But never a drought like the Big Drought, or a flood like the Great Flood. And now a new crop of old hands speak of them—possessively, exclusively. I'm one of the old hands myself. Time has mellowed it all—that raging sea of water and father going to his death in it.

Two songs go on for ever sadly sweetest of all when Coolangubra catches the last of the suns in late Spring evenings—the Narranguy singing to itself in its gravelly bed, and the giant oaks singing the refrains of all the yesterdays.

Brian James

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ABORIGINAL POLICY 1930-1950

SOME PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS

A. P. Elkin

THE following is a brief record of my personal association with the development of opinion and policy on Aboriginal affairs since 1930. My record is of *one* voice, not of a *lone* voice. Moreover, whatever advance has been made from the rather futile protection policies and ideas of segregation of the preceding decades, has been built on the efforts of many who from 1830 onward tried to influence opinion and policy. The final aims varied at different periods, according to changing views here and abroad. Individuals reflected, modified and worked for the ideas which were resolved out of the ferment of events, actions and reactions. Thus, in the nineteen-twenties the League of Nations concept of the Mandate and Australia's responsibility for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea brought world opinion to our very door. The condition of the Aborigines in Australia thenceforth had a bearing on our fitness to fulfil the Mandate in the islands.

Conscience, which had been somewhat lulled for decades, was now sharpened, and clashes and obvious injustices, wherever they occurred, could no longer be ignored as though they did not concern Australia as a whole. A punitive expedition in 1926 became news, and an abortive inquiry did not ease our conscience. An atrocity committed against a group of Aborigines in Central Australia in 1928 did not help matters. Pressure was brought to bear on the Commonwealth Government by humanitarian and missionary organizations. That Government, with authority only in the Northern Territory, had a survey made of Aboriginal conditions there in 1928, and in the following year, Mr C. L. A. Abbott, the Minister responsible for the region, held a Conference with missionary leaders, pastoralists and others on the question of preserving and using the Aborigines, for these 'were almost vital' for the successful settlement of the north and centre. Complaints followed that neither this Conference nor the report and recommendations of the 1928 survey were followed up. However, they both had their cumulative effect on leaders of opinion and on Government Departments.

In 1931, fresh from field-work in north-west Australia, 1927-28, and in the south-central region (Innamincka to the Bight and

to Laverton), 1930, I attended a meeting in Sydney of the Association for the Protection of Native Races. A number of leading citizens, including heads of missionary organizations, were present. They were particularly concerned about injustices to the Aborigines, and advocated protected Reserves, Courts for Native Affairs, and Protectors to supervise the Police Protectors (about whom there were complaints). Thinking the emphasis too negative, I pointed out that Protection Policies did not really protect and then spoke of the need for a 'positive policy' based on the conviction that the Aborigines would not die out if satisfactory education, health and employment measures were put into operation.

In the same year, Mr A. Parkhill, Minister for the Interior, visited the Northern Territory and reported that the Aborigines were adequately protected. On his trip, quite naturally, he saw no evidence to support allegations of ill-treatment, but rather instances of the extraordinary steps taken to ensure their just and humane treatment. The Prime Minister, Mr J. A. Lyons, then announced that the Cabinet would continue its existing policy for the welfare of the Aborigines, and that the latter should be used in the pastoral industry, wherever possible or desirable, with wages paid in kind.

At this period I wrote several articles in journals and newspapers on the problem, including one in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in December 1932, to show that we had neither a policy nor indeed any real interest in the problem. At the annual meeting in June 1933 of the Association for the Protection of Native Races, of which I was now President, we emphasized the need of a broader policy both for the Association and for Governments, suggested that 'care and development' should be substituted for 'care and control' as the objective, and urged the establishment of a Native Affairs Commission with a Chief Commissioner of high repute and large powers.

Then came 1934, the turning point in Aboriginal affairs. Humanitarian and missionary bodies were very active. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sydney Sun* gave much help by interviewing me weekly, reporting all happenings, and writing leaders. Aboriginal matters were a subject of almost daily record, and not only in New South Wales, but also in Victoria.

The most news-making, the saddest, and yet in the long run the most helpful series of incidents occurred in Arnhem Land. In late 1932 five Japanese seamen and two white prospectors were killed by Aborigines, and in 1933 Constable McColl, one of an arresting expedition, was speared. The Administrator, Mr

R. H. Weddell, recommended in September that a punitive expedition of twenty-five (half of special constables and half of Aborigines from tribes friendly to the Administration) be sent into the district. Immediately, humanitarian bodies protested vigorously, fearing a massacre of Aborigines such as had occurred in Western Australia in 1926 and in the Northern Territory in 1928. The proposal was attenuated to a small arresting party, and then abandoned in favour of a 'peace expedition' conducted by two Church Missionary Society missionaries from the Roper River region. They made contact with the Aborigines implicated in the killings and persuaded some of them to go to Darwin, assuring them of a fair trial. One, Tuckiar, was tried in the strange surroundings of the Darwin Court in a language unknown to him, and was sentenced to death for killing the constable. The judge refused to consider the circumstances from the Aboriginal point of view, but criticized the Government for its handling of the incident.

About this time, too, June 1934, eight Aborigines, seven of whom had no previous contact with civilization, were sentenced to death for killing the two prospectors on Woodah Island. The judge refused them an interpreter, stating that 'retributive justice was all the savage could understand'. A third trial in Darwin in the same year, following a Departmental inquiry, concerned a constable's alleged ill-treatment of arrested Aborigines and witnesses, one of whom died from being beaten. Native evidence was disbelieved. In another case, in August, three Caledon Bay natives were found guilty of killing the five Japanese; the judge said that we 'must protect members of a friendly nation', and that the best thing to do with the condemned men would be to hang them. In still another case, a native, Butcher, was sentenced to death for killing his wife and a white man whom he discovered under one mosquito net.

Such a run of cases, verdicts and penalties caused a great outcry in the southern capitals, mainly because of the apparently unjust aspects of the trials. A most significant meeting was held in the King's Hall, Sydney, on 6 August 1934. Arranged by many organizations, it was crowded. A motion was carried asking for the release of Aboriginal prisoners, whose only offence was to protect their women, for a change in the method of trying Aborigines, and for the recall of the Northern Territory Supreme Court Judge, Mr Justice Wells. My speech on the problem of trials and on the need for a positive policy was reported in England as well as in Sydney. The following night I was rung up by Mr Lyons, Prime Minister, asking whether the

report was correct, as he had been rung from London by the Australian High Commissioner there, who in his turn had received an inquiry from the Colonial Office. I sent Mr Lyons the notes of my speech. Thus, Northern Territory native affairs were of interest in England. From then on, the Commonwealth Government through the Minister for the Interior and the Secretary of his Department, gave positive and sympathetic attention to the Aboriginal problem.

Newspapers and various groups took up the protest against the trials, though in Darwin I was attacked on the principle that the people of the North could run their own affairs to their own satisfaction. The Association for the Protection of Native Races raised money to meet possible legal costs, and with others urged the Government to appeal on Tuckiar's behalf on grounds of misdirection and of errors in the conduct of the trial. The appeal was made and was successful. The Administration was instructed to have Tuckiar escorted back to his country. However, he 'escaped' and was never seen or heard of since.

The tide of public opinion which had risen so high in 1934 did not ebb for several years, and pressure was continually exerted on Governments. The Moseley Report on conditions in Western Australia was presented in 1935. About the same time I was asked by the Minister for the Interior to head an inquiry into the allegation that a policeman was involved in the shooting of a native in Central Australia. Believing this to be a magistrate's work, I declined. The committee of three which made the inquiry, found that the shooting was 'unnecessary though legally justified'. This rather startled informed opinion.

In 1937 a very large and influential Conference of missionary and humanitarian societies was held in Sydney, and in Canberra a Conference of Heads of Aboriginal Departments from the States and the Northern Territory. Towards the end of that year, too, the Hon J. McEwen, newly appointed Minister for the Interior, in an interview with me, referred to his responsibility for the welfare of the Aborigines in the Northern Territory, a problem which was new to him. He added that if I convinced him of the soundness of the policy I was advocating, he would undertake to put it to, and through, Cabinet, and get something done. Eventually, he, Mr J. A. Carrodus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and I in a long meeting, drew up the general outlines and aims of what was issued in February 1939, as 'A New Deal for Aborigines'. Mr McEwen also agreed to the suggestion that Mr E. W. P. Chinnery, Director of Native

Affairs and District Services in New Guinea, who was in Australia on leave, should be invited to make a survey of the Aborigines of the Northern Territory, principally to see whether on the basis of his long experience among Papuans and Melanesians, he thought the Aborigines could respond to a forward policy. At the end of six months Mr Chinnery reported that he saw no reason why the Aborigines could not advance as well as the Islanders and he backed up this opinion later, by agreeing to be seconded from New Guinea to become the first Director of Native Affairs in the Northern Territory.

In the meantime, Mr McEwen prepared his policy outline for Cabinet. He asked me to get him expressions of opinions from informed groups around Australia, so that he could assure members of Cabinet that it was not only an Elkin plan. So the New Deal was adopted with its provision for the appointment of a Director of Native Affairs and for trained Patrol Officers. Mr Chinnery took over his position, revised Ordinances, and in spite of the difficulties of the War period, laid a sound foundation for implementing the new policy as soon as full civil control was re-established in the Territory.

A Cabinet Minister can seldom move ahead of informed public opinion: Mr Abbott saw the beginning of advance in such opinion, and Mr Perkins and Mr Patteson appreciated its increase in understanding and in intensity, and took small forward steps. To Mr McEwen, however, must be given the credit for really coming to grips with the problem and of being determined to set policy firmly in a new direction, and of doing so successfully. In this he was strongly aided by Mr J. A. Carrodus who during the many years of his service as Secretary of the Department of the Interior, did everything possible to forward the policy. In the field were Mr Chinnery and later Mr F. Moy, a former New Guinea District Officer and student of mine. Under them the system of Patrol Officers was developed, Settlements for Aborigines established, and better employment conditions for Aborigines implemented.

I would add that my associations have been not only with the Administration and with humanitarian movements. I was also in touch with pastoralists, some of them being my personal friends. They have given me facilities for my research and in addition, have put to me their point of view on the Aboriginal problem. Indeed, some of them have asked me to put to the Administration and Government their opinions of the new policy and regulations. I have always obliged them, though, at the same time, making my own views quite clear.

Some other advances of much importance have been made since the closing stages of the War. When the Commonwealth Department of Social Services was established under Mr F. Rowe, he suggested to me the possibility of making social service benefits available to the Aborigines, that is to persons with a preponderance of Aboriginal blood. Half and lighter castes are considered by the Commonwealth to be 'white'. On his invitation, and along with Mr E. W. P. Chinnery, I gave much time in 1941 to deciding on the principles and wording of the pertinent parts of the Act. And in spite of a few anomalies, which are being gradually dealt with in implementing the Act, mainly in the case of full-bloods on Government Aboriginal Settlements, it marked a great advance towards the goal of citizenship for the Aborigines. With regard to child endowment, the Act was worded so that institutions—missionary, Government or private—would be eligible to receive this benefit for the average number of children for whom they were responsible. We further considered that this money could be spent on the welfare both of children and of expectant and nursing mothers. This provision ensured missions a regular income, but it also put on them a special responsibility for child care.

In February 1948, the Commonwealth Government called a Conference in Canberra of all heads of Aboriginal Departments from the States and the Northern Territory, and of other Commonwealth Departments which were, or could be, concerned with the welfare of Aborigines. As a member of this Conference, I was given the opportunity to speak on needs and policies. Since assimilation into the economic and political life of the country, that is, into full citizenship, had been at least tacitly accepted as the goal, I discussed employment and health problems, and above all, the need to take Aboriginal education seriously. Also, aiming at an over-all convergence of policies (as outlined in a booklet, *Citizenship for the Aborigines*, 1945), I urged that the several Aboriginal Departments should exchange reports and that the heads should visit each other and get to know their various problems and their different methods of dealing with them. At the time, they were not acquainted with conditions and activities outside their own States. Definite advance has been made in this direction.

Eighteen months after this Conference, Dr T. L. Robertson, then Assistant-Director of the Commonwealth Office of Education, informed me that the seed I had sown there was bearing fruit. The Government had agreed to his Office establishing schools for full-blood Aborigines in the Northern Territory.

The following February, the first batch of teachers for these Northern Territory Government Schools and also some missionary teachers were given a special six weeks' orientation and refresher course, in which I gave lectures. There are now eleven of these schools, mostly well equipped.

In the meantime, in August 1948, a Conference was held in Darwin of heads of local Administrative Branches and heads of the missionary organization working in the Northern Territory. The purpose was to agree on a plan of Administration-missionary co-operation in fields in which both were directly concerned. I was asked to preside, and although the problems did present difficult aspects, the meeting was pleasant and successful. In the main, the Government's part was to provide subsidies and grants to cover salaries, building and equipment, together with some degree of oversight and direct help, in the fields of health and education. The missions were to provide trained personnel (teachers and nurses) and do the work.

Incidentally, a little later I was asked by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to interview yet another Minister of his Department. The latter, an elderly man with somewhat old-fashioned 'rationalist' views, did not like co-operating with religious missions. However, he agreed with me that he had no alternative: he could not guarantee a staff to work in the isolated spots where most of the missions were located. Secular motives were not strong enough to induce professional persons to serve in such places.

Although I have outlined the development of policy only from the Commonwealth point of view, advance towards assimilation was also made in the States during the same period. I have had some personal association with the changes. In New South Wales, with the help of an assistant research worker, Mrs Caroline Kelly, I became informed on the mixed-blood problem in the mid-nineteen-thirties, and approached the Aborigines' Protection Board, and then the Premier and also the Leader of the Opposition. A futile Select Committee of Inquiry was followed by a Public Service Board inquiry into Aboriginal conditions in the State. Mr Wallace Wurth, later Chairman of that Board, conducted the inquiry in a masterly manner. Following on his recommendations, the pertinent Act was amended, assimilation became the aim, and the old Protection Board was replaced in 1940 by the Aborigines' Welfare Board, constituted mainly of specialist representatives. A little later, Mr Wurth agreed with my suggestion that District Welfare Officers should be appointed to help Aborigines through the difficult personal

phases of assimilation. I am in 1957 the only remaining original member of that Board.

With regard to Western Australia, some years ago there was much public criticism in that State of its Aboriginal administration. Humanitarian bodies and the leading newspaper urged that I be invited by the Government to visit the State to draw up a policy. All expenses would be guaranteed by public subscription. Hearing of this, I wrote to the Minister concerned with native affairs about what would be involved. He replied, as I expected, that the Government was well satisfied with things as they were. Not very long afterwards, however, a change of Government occurred. Mr (later Sir) Ross McDonald, the new Minister for Native Affairs, visited me at the University of Sydney. He said that when in opposition, his party had used my name in debates on Aboriginal policy, and now that they were in power, they felt that they must make some forward move, but what? I advised him to appoint a good Commissioner for Native Affairs and to back him to the full. I drew the attention of certain Hubert Murray trained men then in Papua to the subsequent advertisement. Mr S. G. Middleton was selected. Several young officers with experience in Papua followed him. Indeed, on a visit to Port Moresby in 1950 I was asked by the Director of District Services there how his branch in Western Australia was getting on! Such loss of staff was, of course, somewhat serious at the time for Papua; but movement of staff between Australian States and Territories is not necessarily a bad thing.

Looking back over Australia as a whole during the past quarter of a century, I see a picture of striking advance, a veritable revolution for the better. Everything is not as it should be or might be. Prejudice is no kinder than physical abuse. But the problems today are not so much legal and administrative as personal, psychological and sociological. They arise on the side of the Aborigines as well as within and from ourselves. They are difficult to solve, but slowly they will be solved, and assimilation will be a fact.

In 1932-33 I published a pamphlet, *A Positive Policy for the Aborigines*, and in 1945, a booklet, *Citizenship for the Aborigines*. The latter would have been unthinkable in 1933. Today the question is simply: Is that citizenship being realized?

Such has been the change in a quarter of a century.

A. P. Elkin

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IN THE last three years **Encounter** has built up a reputation for itself as one of the most stimulating reviews in the English language. Edited in London by Stephen Spender and Irving Kristol, it numbers among its contributors such distinguished writers as Aldous Huxley, Isaiah Berlin, W. H. Auden, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson, Arthur Koestler, Cyril Connolly, Angus Wilson, A. J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell and William Faulkner.

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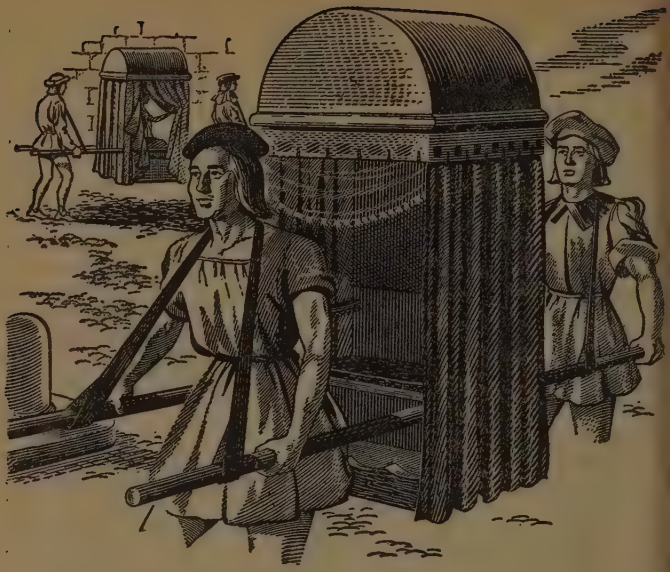

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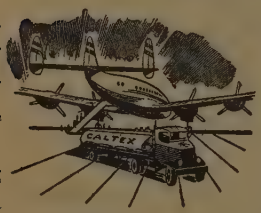

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MEN AND MOTIVES IN ANTARCTICA

John Mayston Béchervaise

AUSTRALIA'S interests in Antarctica are territorial, strategic, economic and scientific. The first is based on a legacy from Britain whose explorers, beginning with Captain James Cook, entered the surrounding ice floes and made many significant discoveries. In this century Australians, both by exploration and occupation, have greatly contributed to knowledge of our nearest continent. The strategic value of Antarctica depends upon the future; it could be compounded of factors sufficiently obvious in today's world. Economically we are hopeful and, on the broadest possible scale, are accepting the challenge of physical exploration.

The International Geophysical Year, which commenced on July 1957, is already a triumph of the co-operation and planning necessary to embrace its wide-spread scientific objects and disciplines. The nature of the earth, the disposition of its substances and forces, the concentric spheres of the air from its surface to their boundaries in space and all phenomena observable there and, completing the survey, solar activity and other spatial contributions to our planet are likely to be much better understood and correlated after analysis of this year's observations. They will have been undertaken simultaneously throughout the world. The wind bloweth where it listeth—and weather, ocean currents, earth movements, geomagnetic forces, cosmic rays, the ionosphere and the aurorae take as little account of national boundaries as do tempests or the forces of gravity. The physics of the earth must be a common knowledge gained by concord and conclave of the world's scientific elect.

The year chosen is climacteric, offering for study an exceptional period of solar and geophysical disturbance. It is also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the second Polar Year (by which term, in 1882-83 and in 1932-33, periods of international study in high latitudes were named). A world-graticule of single-minded observers has not been attempted before in any cause.

Daily contributing to the great project are men and women in the cities, observers scattered through the settled continents, officers of island and desert outposts and, finally, a surprisingly large number of scientific foragers 'for the duration only', in operational spheres where the elements, the length of supply lines and other difficulties seriously contest their occupation.

Such is the present population of Antarctica. That virtually every man in Antarctica is prepared to subordinate all his objects to that of science is practically a condition of his selection.

A special virtue of the fieldworker's existence is that he is kept busy almost to breaking point. No machine ejaculating packaged goods nor mechanical maw demanding limitless fuel is so incessant or importunate as the forces to which he is attuned. Yearlong he races to keep abreast with the perpetual motion of wind and weather, with sky-spanning aurorae, with phenomena which have no gross manifestation for the human senses—cosmic particles; ionospheric, magnetic and seismic disturbances and periods of calm made evident only by extremely sensitive instruments.

He must of necessity spend much time in a place of his own, withdrawn physically and mentally from his fellows; his routine, besides being endless, is often arduous, necessitating journeys to his observatories in all weathers and at all hours. These factors alleviate boredom and improve the society of his fellows. Macbeth might well have been advising an antarctic company

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night: to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper time alone . . .

Some scientists can find common intellectual and conversational ground with everyone else in the expedition. The talk of these men is quicksilver, rolling swiftly to the edge of the ridiculous. They are, almost invariably, capable of appreciating the non-scientific contributions to the party's welfare; perhaps it is inevitable that their estimation is not so generally reciprocated by more material minds. In all ANARE* bases every man takes a share in the domestic chores and even periodically relieves the cook. If the reverse be possible and all non-scientists be trained to perform some essential synoptic observations, the society will be much better integrated. The universal man may be an anachronism anywhere but, in the antarctic, some of his quality in the non-scientists can best balance a party. I look back with joy on the philosophers with whom I have driven dogs.

I am aware that some outstanding scientists have offered for antarctic expeditions; I am almost as sure that, in every case, purposes as compelling or more so than the demands of their profession have motivated them. Even more certainly the

* Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions.

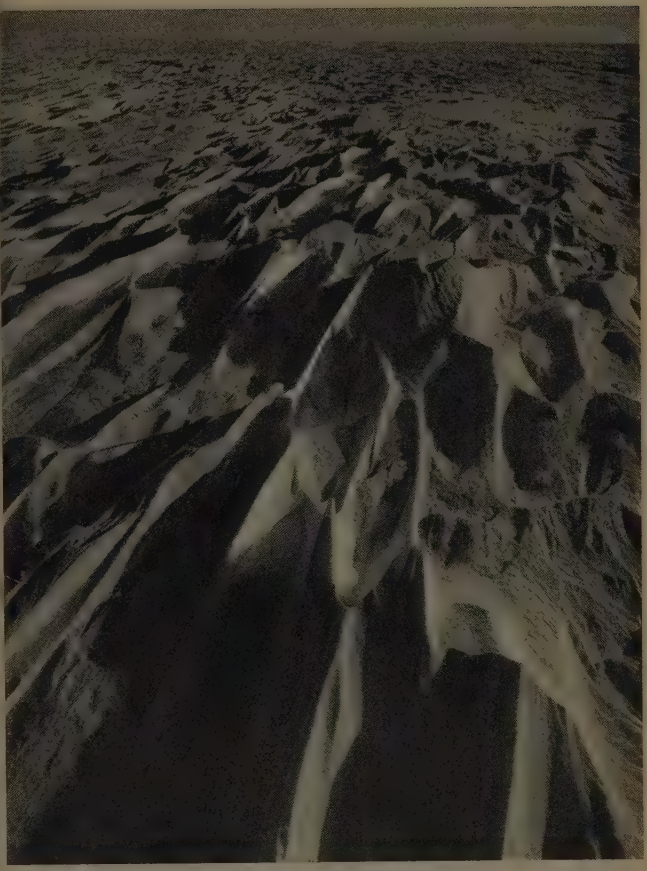
chnicians and tradesmen essential to the modern expedition ave reasons beyond the exercise of their vocations. It has been iid very often that desire for adventure is the main underlying iotive; and, in spite of the current disparagement of the term, nd the consequent tendency to protective understatement as though so clear a desire was somehow unworthy of the age) iis remains true of the men who make the best polar population. Usually these days, shying violently at the emotional undertones f reasons more precise, they say it is 'just for fun' or 'because e like it' or 'because the place is there'. But if the word adventure as been pawned for pride of simplicity, then let it be redeemed or simple pride that men in the twentieth century will still nter upon an undertaking and meet what may happen with ourage and humour.

Of course the adventure is launched in the moment a man igns on' to go south. He attaches himself to the flight of a arbed arrow and he cannot know where it will lead him. Its rajectory will be governed by himself, his companions, his ommission, his equipment and the conditions of weather and e that he will meet in the long months to come. He rapidly eaches a point of no-return and he must remain with his arrow n its passage through time and territory until its orbit is ccomplished. There may be times when his survival will depend n vigorous action, on an automatic response to the stimulus f danger or upon long endurance. This is adventure. It may be xciting and hazardous while it lasts and memorable after-vards; it is very seldom heroic, for men are called upon to do nainly what they must.

Antarctic expeditions are not wholly engaged upon the less naterial aspects of scientific research. Successive geologists, laciologists and surveyors are pushing further and further into he interior. Tracked motor vehicles and aircraft yearly become etter adapted to the work in hand. As always at sea and in the ack ice, without a skilled skipper an expedition has a will but o way. Today, *mutatis mutandis*, the same may be said of the ntarctic pilot and the engineer of vehicles. Dog-teams still ly in crevassed areas and over sea-ice; teams flown, perhaps undreds of miles to the operational area, may provide the best olution at present to the exploration of the extensive antarctic nountain regions in which lie our best hopes of discovering ninerals of economic significance. In all this work, the most nodern conveyances and the best of equipment may reveal nadequacies in the face of blizzard and the chances of the ntarctic plateau. The ultimate joy of the true adventurer

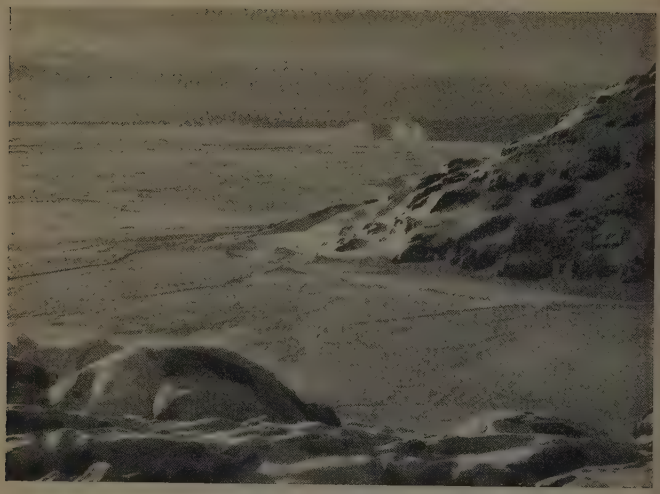
is the challenge of natural problems demanding the abnormal extension of his physical and mental faculties.

The desire to experience life in a less complex and more explicable society may be judged a form of escapism. This reason governs some and influences most men's intentions to go south. It is, however, no escape from reality. He who follows it, as a rule, encounters difficulties more trying than those he spurns and, if he is qualified for the trial, emerges much enriched. But it is certainly true that an Australian antarctic outpost offers an escape from the stratification and divisions of a diversified and populous state. The precise relationship of each man and his work to the community is directly apparent; the technician and tradesman enjoy a standing denied them by a more complex social organization. No man is expendable, replaceable or inessential and therefore no man lacks *amour-propre* unless he himself feels unworthy or inferior. In a contemporary Australian party any rare social distinction almost invariably begins in this way, inversely, and as a result it may grow into an unpleasant psychosis difficult to eradicate. Its roots lie in uneducated and narrow minds and, no matter how clever a man may be in his appointed task, without breadth of vision and some depth of intellect and literacy, he is a bad risk in loneliness and isolation both for himself and his colleagues. Ideally all expedition men should possess broad interests and skills; if like music, chess, story-telling and conversation they have a social value, so much the better. The quality and quantity of a man's reading is not a bad criterion, amongst others, of his suitability. Patience and humour (whether self-inflicted or turned upon his fellows in equally light, unaffected vein) and an almost existentialist sense of values are the marks of genius in such circumstances. These remarks apply particularly, of course, to the small, modern, mechanized base and expedition where there is no secondary or ulterior intention of strategy or military training. Where an antarctic expedition is also a naval operation, as at Little America, or even a military garrison as at Iles de Kerguelen, the problems of society are relatively covert, for men preserve their places in the service hierarchy. Similarly, in some of the older expeditions of the heroic era of Shackleton and Scott, where shore parties were large enough to be classified into Officers, Scientific Staff and Men, integration was never absolute. There are excellent fellows in civilization who could never be happy outside its taboos; there are others who function smoothly only under continuous impersonal authority. These are not suitable antarctic men.



ANARE PHOTO: John Béchervaise

Sastrugi, the characteristic surface of the Antarctic plateau



ANARE PHOTO: John Béchervaise

A view of sea ice and shore

Water is a harsh white mineral

ANARE PHOTO: Fred Elliott

Plateau Camp, 1955

ANARE PHOTOS: John Béchervaise

Singsong at Mawson

ANARE PHOTO: Fred Elliott

The freezing of the sea

Leaving the *Kista Dan* for Lichen Islet, February 1955

ANARE PHOTO: Hugh Oldham

Other reasons than adventure and science and escapism contribute to send men south, sometimes more than once. The government-sponsored expedition, equipping a man fully, supplying him throughout the year with amenities, paying him moderately and taxing him leniently, makes it possible for him to live without financial commitments and to return to a greater sum than he might have saved at home. This motive is not always mercenary. It is often part of a calculated investment of mixed currencies: temporal, emotional and fiscal. Of course even the pure mercenary may possess or acquire the other requisite qualities. Many obtain leave from their regular employment to join an expedition; others resign and chance finding a suitable niche upon their return. Some make considerable sacrifices to realize dreams born in boyhood at a reading of Cherry-Garrard or a musing upon Ponting's pictures.

Science, adventure, escapism, fame, material reward and most other reasons that cause men to join expeditions are not exclusively antarctic. It is of interest to consider some of the aspects that are, and the effects of life in a polar community.

A world lacking women and children, trees and blossoms, natural foods of all kinds, roads, newspapers, coinage—and putting a price upon ease, security, relaxation and rest—tends to produce, in the individual, absolute values for such things. The antarctic icecap, nearly twice the size of Australia, reducible to simpler elements than any other region on earth, allows nothing to be taken for granted. Forms are limited by the nature of snow, ice and rock and to a few magnificent birds and seals in season; colours, other than those intrinsic to these components, are fugitive, depending on the sun's elevation. The conditions of human life, virtually all imported, are in focus most of the time, emphasizing the delight of the warm hut and the smell of cooking. Only one, air, is present naturally; even water is a harsh dry mineral except during a few midsummer weeks on the coast.

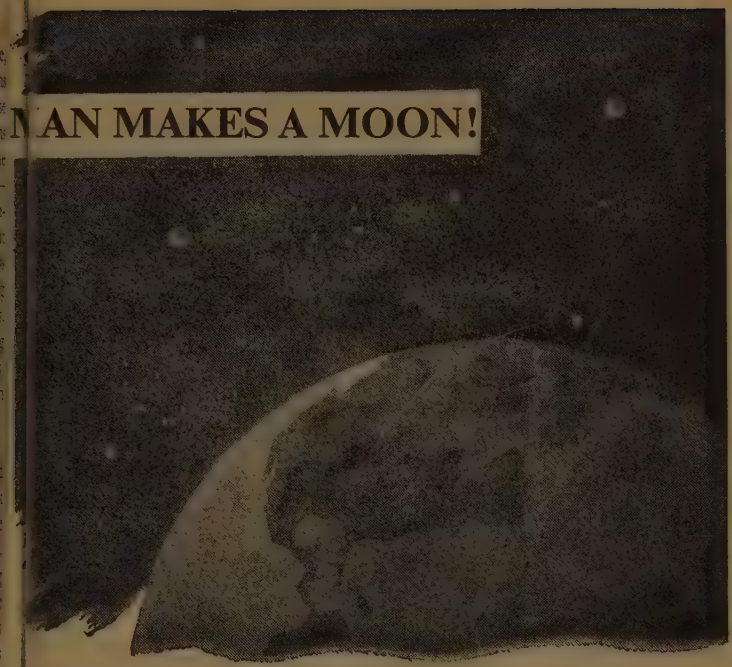
Being essentially more alert—at least over a wider sensory range—than is necessary at more friendly latitudes and because distractions are limited, men are more observant. All sorts of images are extraordinarily intense; close tones of colour in iceberg and glacier are differentiated; the strange and lovely forms of snow drifts and wind-polished ice remain clear like the eidetic imagery of childhood. Distance often possesses an almost preternatural clarity and men find themselves doubting their powers of vision just as, under calm conditions, they can scarcely believe that sounds will travel so far.

While these factors cause the mind to question colour, shape, size and distance in the external world, the blizzard questions all reality, all dimensions, in an obliterating icy flood whose movement is imperceptible to the eyes while its power threatens balance and baffles all other senses. Swiftly to lose the comfortable illusion of real objects in space—huts, companions, vehicles—and discover them momently as monstrously close two-dimensional flickering shadows, to find oneself in a white void without substance above or below causes, at first, a frightening aloneness and self-consciousness. Except for the necessity of grappling with a rope blizzard-line or fumbling for remembered objects, and the breathless discomfort of white blindness and streaming cold, I think the effect would tend towards hypnotism. As it is, vastly aware, one grows to enjoy in a fashion these molluscan incursions, as a supreme simplification of existence.

Men are reticent upon such matters, perhaps inarticulate. In milder latitudes, well insulated by stone and concrete and timber with landscape windows, wind and weather speak directly only to grain and grass and the lower animals. In the antarctic something is breached in man's age-old defences. (Of course they are not so old, nor impregnable, nor enduring as we imagine.) He smiles inwardly at his inevitable anthropomorphism with regard to nature—the malicious blizzard, the searching wind, the pageantry gleaming across the sky—but unconsciously he bows to the southern gods of an uncreated myth.

For most men the visual and auditory memories of a year in the antarctic are probably its most abiding reward. They are not entirely of majestic and awe-inspiring icescapes flushed by the midnight sun, nor of the strange, silent aurora which upsets one's notions of space and light and the forms allotted by Man to Nature. They include, of course, the intensely specialized mammals and birds about which so much has been and so much is yet to be written. Teams of dogs will outlast their canine lifespan in the memories of men who travelled behind them. As well remembered will be men and incidents with men, occasions gregarious and solitary. In any year's expedition, the mess-hut knows evenings which, with all the amenities of home, men will never be able to copy, never be able even faintly to recapture. Only in the mind's eye will any expedition ever again be fully mustered in one place. There will be recalled times spent on the plateau, one's own adventuring, immured by blizzard, thrusting forward hopefully, living in the moment, fearful or elated.

John Mayston Béchervaise



N AN MAKES A MOON!

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It will be an American contri- ution to the astonishing ientific programme of the Inter- tional Geophysical Year.

The satellite — a gleaming here 20 inches in diameter and eighing 21½ pounds — will be rried to the threshold of space a three-stage rocket. Its orbital eed will be 18,000 miles-per- our, and it will circle this planet very 90 minutes.

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EPITHALAMIUM

(For Brian Buckley and Antonia Phelan)

Evan Jones

I

And now within the small, clear ring of light
The paper yields its perfect, even white
To what becomes a slower, sober pen
Trying to find familiar themes again.
In the half-dark a cigarette is bright,
A heater warms the book-encrusted den
In isolation from the world of news:
So far as I can choose,
Nothing is spared that might accommodate the Muse.

II

Outside the moon once more resumes her sway
Over the heavy industries of day,
The almond blossoms gathering her beams.
Inside the darkened windows where she gleams
Bodies are yielded to their sensual play
Or lie impassive as the tide of dreams
Washes across its long forgotten beach,
So far beyond the reach
Of all that I might say in slow or quickened speech.

III

Whose gift is the clear magic of the tongue,
Whose are the images we move among
Along the silent and the crowded streets,
To whom what songs of victories and defeats?
Time eats away the hopes to which we clung,
The heart does not begin what it completes;
One voice is weak among so many men,
So far we've come since when
Clear words and truly sung could light our regimen.

IV

Their lines fall back on images of ease:
Seen from verandahs past a flood of trees
The river-flats are gracious in the spring
And flights of swan are caught upon the wing;
Wood-pigeons, moor-hens, cranes and magpies please
The ear and eye attuned to natural things
From homes set half-way in the country-side:
So far they range and wide
Beyond civilities, their fear and hope and pride.

V

But now the river-flats are dark and still.
Into this ring of light no words will spill
In images of natural ease and grace
Drawn from another time, another place.
For drier barer words must now fulfil
The promise of the Muse, not to deface
The only mirror of the human heart.
So far they turn from art
Who when our speech turns chill prefer to draw apart.

VI

Therefore accept the lyric that I write,
Contemplative in this September night,
Before the dawn breaks and I go to bed,
Its music running slowly through my head.
May it seem fair against its bridal white
And gently may its silent music spread
Over your room like waves across that beach.
So far you've come to reach
This haven in your flight and lie thus each to each.

VII

Now that the city lies as if in sleep,
Two people somewhere in its darkness keep
The celebration of a single love
And feel and know each other as they move,
And as the waves of night sink still more deep
Into its last recesses they will rove

To find a simple, fabulous delight
So far beyond the plight
In which the clock's hands creep to end a single night.

VIII

May all the wished felicities be found
As each to each eternally is bound,
And close within your marriage may there grow
A deeper unison of moods, as though
Yours were two notes that struck a chordant sound.
And may its further fructifying show
That such indebted love can yield a life
So far surpassing strife
On more embattled ground for both the man and wife.

IX

For Toni, Brian, I would have you take
A care that's care not only for her sake
But for your own, because you have to live
With her as that one person who can give
The substance and the shadow that you make
Into your private moral narrative.
Thus even if we love ourselves alone,
So far it might be shown
That this need never break the bonds in which we've grown.

X

And Toni, may you be dependent yet
Be a support, as when two cards are set
Against each other to become a home:
This is the state to which we all might come
If proud uncertain egos could but let
Themselves imagine they are less alone.
Two people are not one; and yet perhaps
So far might pride collapse
That man and wife abet each other in its traps.

XI

Two people now have come together young,
Early and yet not hastily, among
The civil conversations of each day,

And who would have it any other way?
These things are spoken in the common tongue
Although the holy rituals will stay,
Keeping their wonted state with him who hears—
    So far across the years
The fisher's net is flung, and never disappears.

XII

The night fades and, its celebration kept
Somewhere within the city as it slept,
I bring this lyric to a quiet end.
It is a simple present from a friend
Whose art is out of style; but still accept
This with whatever truth it might subtend.
My wife and I would wish you our success:
    So far as we might bless,
Who never starved nor wept, we wish you happiness.

XIII

These words were written in a ring of light
Kept burning here so late into the night
As to allow this insufficient pen
Rehearsal of its favourite themes again,
Content to be not wholly wrong, nor right,
And keeping close within a world of men
Neither unchanging nor the world of news.
    So far as I could choose
Nothing was spared that might accommodate the Muse.

Evan Jones

THE POETRY SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA has published in aid of the Chair of Australian Literature Fund a First Anthology (1956) containing poems by members, selected by Wesley Milgate and Imogen Whyse. The volume has been handsomely produced for the Society by Edwards & Shaw, price 21s. 9d.

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LITERARY CONVICTS

or

SEND OUT A BRITON

John Douglas Pringle

THAT Australia began as a dumping ground for British convicts no one can very well dispute. (What has always seemed odd to me is that so many Australians are ashamed of it while the British swell with pride because this act of unprecedented callousness—it has had, of course, some notable successors—turned out, on the whole, so well. If there were any justice in the world, it should surely be the other way round.) No one, however, has yet pointed out that long after the convict system had been brought to an end, British writers continued to sentence their unwanted characters to transportation. When the plot thickens to the point where it congeals, when some wretched character cannot decently be killed off in a railway accident or made to commit suicide in the morning room, he can always be whisked off to Australia. British poets and novelists have been doing this for over one hundred years and, believe it or not, they are still doing it today. If literary migrants could be added to real ones, we in this country should be in a fair way to over-population.

I do not know who the first literary migrant was but the most famous is certainly Mr Micawber. Any experienced writer can see, towards the end of *David Copperfield*, that the disposal of Mr Micawber is going to present Dickens with certain difficulties. He is too important to be pushed to one side. He is too genial to be killed. He cannot be married off because he is married already. Dickens solves the problem by getting David's aunt to arrange for the Micawbers' emigration to Australia. They accept the news bravely.

'There is but one question, my dear ma'am, I could wish to ask,' said Mrs Micawber. 'The climate, I believe, is healthy?' 'Finest in the world,' said my aunt. 'Just so,' returned Mrs Micawber.

'Then my question arises. Now, are the circumstances of the country such, that a man of Mr Micawber's abilities would have a fair chance of rising in the social scale? I will not say, at present, might he aspire to be governor, or anything of that sort; but would there be a reasonable opening for his talents

to develop themselves—that, would be amply sufficient—and find their own expansion?'

'No better opening anywhere,' said my aunt, 'for a man who conducts himself well, and is industrious.'

'For a man who conducts himself well,' repeated Mrs Micawber, with her clearest business manner, 'and is industrious. Precisely. It is evident to me that Australia is the legitimate sphere of action for Mr Micawber!'

'I entertain the conviction, my dear madam,' said Mr Micawber, 'that it is, under existing circumstances, the land, the only land, for myself and family; and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up on that shore.'

It is a sign of Dickens' genius that this slightly dirty literary trick seems both right and inevitable. This is a country where extraordinary things *do* turn up with astonishing frequency. My own guess is that Mr Micawber's talents at last found their proper sphere and that he did very well indeed.

No one, I think, could say the same of the unfortunate Mr Gigadibs who is suddenly despatched by Robert Browning in the last ten lines of *Bishop Blougram. Bishop Blougram* is a magnificent poem for which I have the greatest admiration, but poor Gigadibs never has a chance. This brash young man—a journalist of sorts—after being annihilated by the Bishop in a long argument in which he never, in fact, utters a word, is packed off to Australia at short notice.

> *He did not sit five minutes. Just a week*
> *Sufficed his sudden healthy vehemence.*
> *(Something had struck him in the 'Outward Bound'*
> *Another way than Blougram's purpose was)*
> *And having bought, not cabin-furniture*
> *But settler's implements (enough for three)*
> *And started for Australia—there, I hope,*
> *By this time he has tested his first plough,*
> *And studied his last chapter of St John.*

No, it won't do. With the best will in the world I cannot see Gigadibs as a cocky farmer on the Western slopes. He gave it away after a few months; sold his plough; moved to the gold-fields and ended, a hopeless drunk, hanging round the Salvation Army Hostel in Sydney.

A still more unlikely settler is Algernon in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest.* Fortunately Algernon is saved, but only after Cecily has frightened him out of his wits—his only real asset—by telling him that Uncle Jack wants to speak to him about his emigrating:

CECILY: But still I think you had better wait until Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

ALGERNON: About my what?

CECILY: Your emigrating. He has gone out to buy your outfit.

ALGERNON: I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neck-ties at all.

CECILY: I don't think you will require neck-ties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

ALGERNON: Australia! I'd sooner die.

CECILY: Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world and Australia.

ALGERNON: Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Even if Algernon had gone he would not, of course, have ended hanging round the Salvation Army Hostel with Gigadibs. He would, after losing all his money on some absurd adventure like selling spats to boundary riders, have been appointed some kind of attaché to the Governor—probably to that Lord Lundy who is himself one of the most illustrious of all literary migrants in Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Tales*.

The Duke—his aged grandsire—bore
The shame till he could bear no more.
He rallied his declining powers
Summoned the youth to Brackley Towers,
And bitterly addressed him thus—
'Sir! you have disappointed us!
We had intended you to be
The next Prime Minister but three:
The stocks were sold; the press was squared:
The middle-class was quite prepared.
But as it is! . . my language fails!
Go out and govern New South Wales!'

It is pleasant to think that Lord Lundy could now look forward to a pension of £3,000 a year—or is it £2,600?—from a Labour Government in return for his distinguished services.

Modern English novelists have, of course, to treat the thing a little more circumspectly but the old trick still works. For instance Miss Marghanita Laski used it not long ago in a novel called *The Village*, a neat little study of class consciousness

in rural England. In this novel Roy Wilson, a compositor in a printing works, gets engaged to Margaret Trevor, the daughter of decayed gentry living in the same village. The Trevors make a fearful fuss but at last consent to the marriage on condition that Roy and Margaret go and live somewhere else where their presence will not affect the Trevors' social position. Roy agrees reluctantly but says he would rather make a clean break and 'go off somewhere like New Zealand, say, where this sort of thing doesn't matter so much anyhow'. 'Not New Zealand,' said Wendy (Mrs Trevor) quickly before she had time to think. 'There's Aunt Doris in New Zealand.' Roy let out a curt explosive laugh. 'Seems as if it does matter in New Zealand, after all,' he commented. 'Well, if I'm not to be here, it's all one to me. We'll make it Australia. You haven't,' he asked Wendy ironically, 'got any relatives in Australia?'

She hasn't—and to Australia they go.

What happened to Roy and Margaret when they got here, I'm not sure. I'm inclined to think there's room for quite a good ironic sequel in which Margaret settles down like a bush fire but Roy is taken aback by the rather subtle mixture of twentieth century egalitarianism and nineteenth century snobbery which is our special contribution to the problem. At first the poor chap is bewildered by not knowing who to say 'Sir' to and whom to call 'Sport'. When he finds out just how democratic we are, he is enraptured—until the fatal day when he is caught by the Managing Director of his newspaper using the lift reserved for Executives, and is dismissed on the spot. Too late he remembers George Orwell's classic advice: 'All men are equal but some are more equal than others.' *John Douglas Pringle*

"Dons Know Best . . . . "

Not always, perhaps, but at any rate where the government of Universities is concerned. Recent events have shown that academic freedom is by no means secure, even in democratic countries.

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COMMUNIST STRATEGY IN AUSTRALIA 1920-1957

J. E. Henry

THE Australian Communist Party was officially formed in 1920. From the beginning the leaders did not look to parliamentary elections or the direct political conversion of the masses as a way of achieving power. Accepting the basic strategy laid down by Lenin and later Stalin, they have always relied on two other methods.

One is a general programme of propaganda and permeation designed to create a pro-leftist climate of opinion in the community. This work was carried on in the labour movement and more widely through front organizations and by extending influence in the press, in the universities and the intelligentsia, among scientists, artists and writers, and even within religious groups. In this way ideas emanating from the Party became respectable platitudes in wide circles, and anti-Communism was felt to be discreditable, fanatical and reactionary. This highly successful propaganda effort acted like an invisible nerve gas paralysing potential resistance, but it was not conceived as the means of actually rising to power. For that purpose the Communists developed the second method.

This was based on the Leninist and Stalinist directives to the Communist Parties in capitalist democracies to convert the trade union movement into a striking force for ultimate revolutionary ends. Australia is one of the countries where this strategy achieved a remarkable degree of success, and it is important to understand why. Australia is the most highly unionized country in the free world. The Australian worker is loyal to his union and will accept the direction of his union leaders without bothering much about their political affiliations. He is also generally imbued with a class-war outlook although he has no revolutionary inclinations. At the same time he is largely apathetic about union affairs and cannot easily be induced to attend meetings or accept office. The structure and rules of unions make it relatively easy for a union to be captured and held by anyone who has a quite small group at his disposal, willing to attend all meetings, to work as active propagandists, and to provide candidates for all union positions from the bottom to the top.

The basic pattern of action as revealed in Australian Communist Party text-books, in the teaching given in Party Schools, and in Party organs like *Communist Review* is a seven-point programme:

1. Win control of individual key trade unions.
2. Use the money, propaganda facilities, organizational machinery, and power of coercion thus gained to extend Communist influence and stifle opposition.
3. Proceed to full control of the trade union movement by amalgamating unions, and by seizing control of the Trades and Labor Councils in each State and the ACTU at the Commonwealth level.
4. Use the affiliation of unions with the ALP to destroy its independence and align it with the Communist Party.
5. Direct the full weight of the industrial machine against the Government and the economy under the plea of a militant struggle for the workers.
6. Call a general strike: or, in the stream-lined later version, by withdrawing selected key groups of workers bring about a nation-wide stoppage.
7. Assume revolutionary control in the paralysis of Government and industry thus brought about.

Even if this seven-point programme is only partly achieved it can still bring success under modern conditions, in conjunction with the mounting external threat of Communist aggression from Red China. A weakened, divided, and semi-subverted Australia can be brought from a posture of resistance down to neutralism and defeatism and finally collapse under the giant twin pressures of internal and external Communist power, perhaps even before actual invasion.

In 1921 a Militant Minority Movement appeared in the industrial sphere, which disclaimed Communist connections and drew in many non-Communists. Other such groups passed as Progressives or just plain Militants, equally denying Communist affiliations. It may be remembered that Ernest Thornton on the eve of his rise to power in the Ironworkers publicly denied being a Communist. By ceaseless work and by taking advantage of the too frequently inert, incompetent or dishonest existing union leadership, one union after another was gradually captured at the State or Federal level. Union funds were then siphoned off by various devices for Communist Party purposes. Union positions were found for Party functionaries: at one time a considerable number of the Sydney District Committee of the

'arty were on the pay-roll of the Clerks' Union, busily engaged n other than union work. Men who tried to oppose the leader- nip were expelled from the unions on false charges, and if nis was quashed by the courts they were declared black, thrown ut of jobs by threat of stoppages, and hounded out of the ndustry. One well-known case was the persecution by the Communist-controlled BWIU in Victoria of a man named Miller who questioned the union balance sheet at a general neeting. It was this instance that convinced Chifley of the need or the anti-victimization clause which he inserted in the Arbitration Act—one of those 'penal' clauses which are now nder attack from the ALP as well as the ACP. Ballots were igged wholesale, as was later exposed by the revelations of harpley and by upheavals in the Clerks' and Ironworkers'.

The Second World War gave a big impetus to Communist ontrol when rapid industrial expansion increased the member- nip and weight of the main industrial unions at a time when ublic opinion was favourable to the Communists. At their eak the Communists had predominant control of every major nion affiliated to the ACTU and held dozens of other unions t the State or Federal level. Out of about one million trade nionists in Australia approximately four hundred thousand were under Communist control, and the greatest strength was n the key industrial unions. The financial resources thus gained mounted to about £600,000 a year at the value of money t that time. Four of the five State Trades and Labor Councils were Communist strongholds and the fifth, Melbourne, had nly a slight margin. In 1943 the *political* consequences of this rowing power were sharply revealed when the Communists nd their sympathizers failed by only fifteen or sixteen votes o capture the Victorian ALP State Conference and convert he Victorian Labor Party into a Communist dependency.

In 1945 the Communists' big year came. They reached out or supreme control of the trade union movement by capturing he ACTU. Using surprise tactics they affiliated for their full ook membership (usually unions had affiliated for only a ortion of their total membership to lessen the financial com- nitment). Indeed the Communists went further and affiliated or members who had left the industry or had never been in he industry or had passed on to their eternal rest. At the 1945 iennial congress they had a clear majority of ninety delegates n a test vote. They proceeded to put through two vital esolutions: one an amendment changing the method of election o the Interstate Executive to suit themselves; the other an

amendment making decisions of the ACTU binding on the constituent bodies. The Communists were jubilant. It seemed that unchallengeable industrial power lay in their hands: the final goal began to appear close.

But forces of resistance had at last begun to gather. Victorian Labor leaders had become alarmed, if only because they saw their own jobs and advantages in jeopardy. They began to seek means of staying the Communist advance. By 1946 the gathering resistance had become nation-wide in the form of the ALP-endorsed Industrial Groups. A fierce struggle ensued about which the general public cared and understood little. The anti-Communist wave was not an automatic revulsion of unorganized public feeling such as the naive wrongly imagine will always stop the Communists if they 'go too far'. It was a planned and organized campaign relying on the courage and self-sacrifice of men of diverse creeds and opinions working under appalling difficulties, united for a great purpose.

The first emergency task was to try to defeat the ACTU amendments, which had to be ratified by a majority of the State Trades and Labor Councils. Sufficient influence was regained to defeat the amendment changing the method of electing the Executive. But the other amendment, making ACTU decisions binding, was ratified, and the manner of this is instructive. It was carried virtually on the vote of one delegate. NSW and Queensland voted in favour. Victoria and Tasmania turned it down. The vote in South Australia was therefore critical. On the night, the Communists won a battle of tactics by the old method of stringing out the business of the meeting, until three of the anti-Communist delegates left to catch their last trams. The Communists sat tight and won by one vote.

For some years the counter-offensive was insufficiently developed to prevent the Communists from directing the obedient machine they controlled against the nation's economy. The 'Black Christmas' in NSW in 1945 when tens of thousands of workers were out for thirteen weeks without strike pay was only the first of a sequence of hammer-blows in the major States. A series of upheavals in 1949 culminated in the great coal strike which forced the Chifley Government into punitive action and undoubtedly led to its defeat at the polls. But gradually the anti-Communist offensive mounted. After the burning of three thousand ballot papers by a rattled returning officer in the Victorian Branch of the Federated Clerks' Union, non-Communists, by utilizing the provisions of the Chifley clean-ballots legislation, were elected in 1950 to office in that branch and

This led to non-Communist victory on the Federal Executive of the Clerks' Union. Corrupt ballot practices in the Ironworkers' Association were exposed in court and a 'court-conducted' ballot swept every Communist candidate out of office in the Ironworkers' elections of 1952. The later Menzies legislation eliminated the difficult and costly task of proving corruption in court and enabled a clean ballot to be obtained on petition of sufficient members. Union after union was wrested from the Communist grip. The Communists seemed to be on the run. They were driven back to their industrial stronghold of seven or eight key unions, chief of which were the Seamen's Union, the Waterside Workers' Federation and the Miners' Federation. The battle for this stronghold was still a formidable prospect, but no longer seemed a hopeless task. The Communists had to struggle with near-panic and defeatism in their rank-and-file.

But Communism is characterized by an extraordinary tenacity and flexibility. Defeats are never accepted as final: they are studied and the tactical lessons are drawn. Already in December 1951, *Communist Review* indicated that strategy had been revised and shone a torch on the road ahead. The essential aim was to nullify or destroy the weapons that had been used so effectively against them: the Industrial Groups, the clean-ballots legislation, the 'penal' clauses in the Arbitration Act.

How was this to be done? *Communist Review* openly announced the programme. Like Hitler, the Communists could rely on people not reading or taking seriously their writings and thus falling into even well-advertised traps laid for them. Their National Secretary, Lance Sharkey, gave the essence of the new strategy in the July 1952 issue: 'It is a question for us of setting out consciously to foster a Left wing in the Labor Party to encourage all the incipient revolts expressing themselves in the Labor Party.'

This was not as difficult as it might have seemed. Labor leaders who had once been frightened of the Communists now felt safe from that quarter and alarmed by 'Grouper' strength. It was not only Communist union leaders who had reason to fear clean ballots and the reforming fervour of the best of the Groupers. There were men also who had been, inevitably or through mistakes and abuses, bruised and brushed aside in the rise of the Groups. Others had a sectarian dislike of the Groups because it had proved far more easy to enlist Catholics, with their religious opposition to Communism, than other people: it was alleged that the Catholic Church was using the Groups deliberately to capture political power. Others pointed to real

or imagined instances of the use of questionable methods or to the shortcomings of some of the new Grouper officials. And there were political leaders who would tolerate the Groups only if they remained unconditionally subservient to their own power and policy, whatever its tendency.

The break-through of the carefully fostered left revolt in the ALP came in October 1954 when Dr Evatt denounced the Groups, using the poisoned weapon of sectarian prejudice. Through the accident of Mr Kim Beazley's absence abroad the anti-Groupers had a majority on the Federal Executive and used it to carry out a coup d'état. Even so, the manoeuvre appeared on the surface to be a desperate one. The Groupers held the eastern States and seemed the stronger force. But the anti-Groupers knew exactly what they were doing. When they struck in Victoria they knew, as of certain knowledge, that a substantial portion of the Grouper force in NSW had already determined in such a case to defect from the national unity of the anti-Communist front and leave the Victorians to their fate. It was these same people in NSW who, after boasting that the Federal Executive would never move in on their stronghold, once more secretly broke the unity of resistance in NSW in May 1956 and accepted the Federal coup d'état. Their defection caused the subsequent wavering and isolation of others who had been willing to resist if unity had been maintained.

It is not my intention to speculate on the motives or intentions of Dr Evatt or other Labor leaders who brought about the outlawing of the Industrial Groups, or to canvass the merits of the rival theses maintained by the now divided anti-Communist forces, as represented in NSW by the growing Democratic Labor Party and the reviving Industrial Groups on the one hand and the 'stay-in-the-ALP' remnants on the other. My concern is with the pattern of Communist strategy. There is no doubt from Communist comments which side they really fear: they have hailed with delight the division in the anti-Communist ranks and advised encouragement of those who twice betrayed the united anti-Communist front.

The Communists are in good heart once more and are making gains industrially and politically. 'Unity tickets' in which ALP men unmolested by their Party make common cause with Communists are bringing Communism back to power in union after union. The ALP, through the Hobart and Brisbane Conference decisions of 1955 and 1957, has condemned the only weapons with which Communism can be beaten in the industrial field and has aligned itself with the Communists

n foreign policy, defence and migration. Crypto-Communists re now very numerous and active in the ALP branches and in nion delegations sent to State Conferences. It is important o understand that the Communist aim is *not* the destruction f the ALP but a working alliance with it, leading, if possible, o an ultimate merger so as to create the type of 'socialist unity' arty which in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia ushered a Communist rule. In an address to a Party School published n *Communist Review*, April, 1957, M. McCalman explained: Our ultimate aim is to form a United Workers' Party on the asis of the defeat of the right wing and its class collaboration olicy, and the adoption of Marxist scientific Socialist principles.' he continued presence of a timorous minority of defeated ight-wingers clinging desperately to the ALP under the shadow f a ruthless and unconstitutional Federal dictatorship and pologizing for or explaining away its Communist-aligned olicies is not necessarily a bad thing from their point of view, t least for a time, since it provides a rag of respectability to onceal the naked truth from habitual ALP supporters.

Much may be learnt from the brilliant recovery made by the Communists since 1952. They succeeded because they worked n a nation-wide scale as a united team at all levels. They elieved in their cause and would not concede defeat. They xploited every weakness of their opponents. They built up rom diverse material a broad front of hostility to the Groups. Their unscrupulous methods and indifference to the moral uality of their associates should not, of course, be imitated, nor need it be. Once more anti-Communist resistance is being allied. The Communists can be thrown back: but only by oyal, intelligent and efficient teamwork transcending all petty nd irrelevant divisions. The survival of Australia as a free nation is the stake that will be played for in the struggle that ies ahead.

J.E. Henry

I remembered that Adam Smith and Gibbon had told us the dark ages were gone, never more to return, that modern Europe was in no danger of the fate which had befallen the Roman empire. It had not occurred to them that civilization itself might engender the barbarians who should destroy it. It had not occurred to them that in the very heart of great capitals, in the neighbourhood of splendid places, and churches, and theatres, and libraries, and museums, vice and ignorance might produce a race of Huns fiercer than those who marched under Attila, and of Vandals more bent on destruction than those who followed Genseric.

Lord Macaulay, SPEECH ON RE-ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT, 1852

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THE MAGIAN HERESY

James McAuley

AT THE beginning of the modern period Hegel announced the death of poetry. It was an honourable death from his point of view; for, as he saw it, poetry like religion had been superseded in its function as an organ of the Absolute by the emergence of the supreme rationality of philosophy—Hegelian philosophy, naturally. Poetry, as the highest of the arts, is thus fulfilled and overpassed by 'the prose of reason'.

One could make an anthology of similar pronouncements arrived at from different points of view. In England, for instance, Lord Macaulay in his essay on Milton said that Milton's difficulty was that he wrote in an age in which poetry had already been superseded: 'We think that, as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines . . . Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness . . . Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age.'

The poets themselves were deeply troubled by the difficulties into which poetry seemed to be falling. Certainly they did not give up without a struggle the hope of coming to terms with the new ideas of their age. Blake at first tried to include the French Revolution in his system and applauded Tom Paine. Shelley wanted to be the trumpet of Godwinism. Wordsworth and Coleridge started with advanced ideas from which they had retreated by the time they entered their most fruitful period of composition. Goethe and Schiller and the other German writers tried to adjust themselves to the Kantian revolution. Byron, Pushkin, Hugo, Mickiewicz, all had complex relations with the new ideas and movements of the age. Nevertheless it became clearer and clearer that the attempted alliance between modern poetry and the dominant modern ideological tendencies was based on a series of misunderstandings and must break down into incompatibilities. Poetry could glow in sympathy with struggles for national liberty against oppression, but it could not remain fruitful in contact with systems of thought which inevitably tended towards the debasement of the great themes and values of literature. Engels noted with annoyance that the great period of German literature showed a decline in enthusiasm for

revolutionary ideas, and this drawing back by the poets as the real implications of what was happening became apparent grew more marked and more general throughout Europe. At the lower levels of literature it is always possible to find writers who share the 'modern' outlook, but the upper levels, where alone things of permanent value are created, are occupied by a medley of quite unsatisfactory persons, deserters from the march of mind. 'Modernity' in poetry therefore had to mean something different from the official 'modernity' of a society whose intellectual leaders were men like Bentham, Comte or Marx. *Poetic* modernity is not the direct image and expression of the secularist Enlightenment of modern times, for the poets intuitively knew that this constituted an anti-poetic. Neither does it, usually, spring directly from the traditions of Christian humanism; for most of the poets continued to accept from the philosophers the assurance that the old orthodoxy was dead, even while they reacted against the ideological alternatives offered in its place. Under the pressure of these twin negations, the poets sought to continue poetry, and establish a cultural role for it, in unprecedented ways.

A superficial and misleading formulation of the new attitude was made in the phrases 'art for art's sake' and 'pure poetry'. These phrases expressed the need that poets saw for cutting their art loose from entanglement with nineteenth-century notions of what constituted reality and utility since these were death to poetry. But their poetry remained attached nevertheless to another conception of reality, and it was even reduced, in extreme cases, to a merely instrumental role: in an attempted conquest of the Absolute.

Far from confining themselves to a purely literary domain, the poets tended to despise mere 'literature', which became a word of reproach. They wanted to lift poetry out of this domain and transform it utterly. It must become magic, gnosis, paracletic inspiration, prophecy, revelation, even divine creation. The poet was to be no longer a mere literary person: his true role was that of hierophant, prophet, seer, shaman or magus. The lower the general opinion of poetry sank in society at large, the more arrogant and fantastic became the claims of its devotees.

When we speak of 'modernity' in poetry, therefore, we mean something different from the 'modernity' which took possession of the modern mind in general. The two things are curiously related, but mainly antagonistic one to the other. As against the ever more mundane and materialistic gnosis of the Enlightenment, the poets took flight in hope of attaining a new *poetic*

gnosis whose content, however, was derived from the ancient underground streams of occultism, cabbalism and theosophy. It was hoped that the poetic word would be the Logos of a new dispensation, the informing spirit of a new age in which the truths and powers and values which had once belonged to religion would be restored and thereby the world transformed. It is interesting to see how even in England, where the wilder dreams of European romanticism were not much in request, the same tendency to turn poetry into a substitute for religion appeared. Matthew Arnold wrote: 'most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry'. W. B. Yeats said that the poet was to replace the priest. I. A. Richards more recently has said of poetry that 'it can save us'. Middleton Murry has said that it offers us 'visible salvation'.

The various alternative ways of formulating this ambition of poetic modernity all have in common the desire to ascribe to the poetic word a preternatural power. This is the tendency that I call the Magian Heresy.

William Blake opened the modern period for English Poetry. He gave to himself the same status as he accorded the Hebrew prophets and other inspired teachers of mankind. He put forward his writings as sacred scripture in no way different from the Bible. To be a poet in a purely literary sense was no part of his ambition: he was the secretary of that immanent Mental Totality which was his Absolute, and he believed he wrote his verses under dictation from this source:

Mark well my words: they are of your eternal salvation.

Repeatedly, in all parts of his writings he insists on a strict identification of poetic inspiration with divine vision and revelation. 'All religions are one'; they are all derived from 'the Poetic Genius, which is everywhere call'd the Spirit of Prophecy'. Indeed, Blake does not shrink from the belief that he has a very special place amongst the prophets, because it has fallen to him to initiate a new dispensation in accordance with Swedenborg's prophecy that 1757—Blake's birth-year—was the beginning of the new order:

The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations.

Humility was not one of Blake's favourite virtues. The amalgam of gnostic and rationalist and Christian ideas which Blake made his own has proved particularly attractive to many seeking modern minds, and there have not been lacking those who accept his assertions at the value he placed on them. Thus one of his most faithful interpreters, Bernard Blackstone, affirms that he is 'the great teacher of the modern Western world'.

On the Continent at the same time the German poet Novalis was a figure of seminal importance. He is, incidentally, in many ways a spiritual ancestor of the Australian poet Chris Brennan. For Novalis, poetry was indeed a magian task. His reply to Hegel was to set the poetic spirit in place of Reason as the supreme consciousness, the *Weltgeist.* I run together a selection of his aphorisms:

'Poetry is the true absolutely Real. This is the kernel of my philosophy: the more poetical, the truer. Only an artist can divine the meaning of life. Poetry is an act of creation. The magican is a poet: the prophet is to the magican as the man of taste is to the poet. The poetical philosopher is *en état de Créateur absolu.* Philosophy is the theory of poetry. It is easy to see why in the end everything becomes poetry: does not the world in the end become feeling?'

Novalis was alienated from orthodox Christianity by the influence of the Enlightenment. He looked towards magic, alchemy, and theosophy to supply suggestions for what was missing. Retaining the name and in large measure the sentiments of a Christian, he dreamt of a New Order which would be a new heterodox Christendom: 'Christianity must once again live and work, and form for itself a visible Church transcending territorial boundaries, which will take to its bosom all the souls that thirst for the supernatural, and which will reconcile the old world with the new. It must once more pour out the cornucopia of blessing upon the peoples . . . When will that be? That is not to be asked. Only be patient: it will, it must come, that holy time of eternal peace, when the new Jerusalem will be the capital of the world.'

The middle stages of the modern Progress of Poetry centre upon the French Symbolists. Poetry as a privileged instrument for attaining the Absolute is the idea haunting their work. It was in Rimbaud that the ambition to be a true magus was taken to its farthest limits. Out of his readings in alchemy and occultism he developed a doctrine whereby, God being deposed, the poet must usurp divine creative power. Rimbaud's strange aim was to reach that 'central point' his occultist masters spoke of, from which domination of nature becomes possible. The poet, having conquered supreme occult power, could undertake the Great Work, namely the transformation of the present order of reality. Rimbaud was not interested in poetry as a literary pursuit. The mainspring of his work is the attempt to attain the privileges of divinity. Once he became convinced that this magian enterprise was doomed to failure he fell silent.

It is interesting to note that Mallarmé was also reduced to a confession of failure in his somewhat similar enterprise. He sought a poetry that would express the inexpressible Absolute—which at different times he called the 'azure', the 'ideal', 'silence', 'nothingness'. He too attributed to poetic speech a magical quasi-divine power. But in the end he recognized the hopelessness of the task: 'decidedly I am climbing down from the Absolute . . . after all, poems, even if only tinged with the Absolute, are still beautiful.' And again: 'I am becoming once more purely and simply a littérateur.' He had found that a rigorous following of the path he had traced led merely to frustration and sterility.

With Valéry the impulse towards the Absolute is masked by philosophical scepticism. He rejects the Absolute. Nevertheless, as we see in his writings on Leonardo and M. Teste, he too sought a 'central point' from which the 'Great Work' might be accomplished; only the 'central point' is now conceived to be within the mind as the point of complete self-knowledge, from which works of genius in any direction become possible. Valéry's history is untypical also in this, that he deserted poetry in order to seek this central point of consciousness. When he returned to poetry in 1917 he did not take it up as the supreme instrument of gnosis, but simply, so he said, as a game, a form of pastime, a mere habit. He affected to despise poetry, but in the poetry he wrote one can see the baffled symbolist ambition, negated but not quieted by a refined scepticism. His work lives by its sensitiveness to the transcendental ideas it denies: it is a classical temple for nihilist rites.

Among the great moderns the outstanding name is Rainer Maria Rilke, who has been enormously influential. The Rilke cult has gone in some quarters to astonishing lengths. Rilke's work is in many ways the culmination of the deepest romantic strain in German thought and poetry. He takes up the idea of Novalis: 'in the end everything becomes poetry'. Through the 'heartwork' of the poetic imagination everything must be received into the self and raised to a superhuman level of being: the visible must be changed into the invisible. In the *Duino Elegies* the Angels stand for this higher degree of consciousness, and in the Ninth Elegy Rilke says:

> *Earth, is it not this you want: an invisible*
> *Resurrection in us?—Is not this your dream,*
> *To be one day invisible?—Earth! Invisible!*
> *What task do you press on us, if not transformation?*

The external witness of this inner transformation is poetry.

Orpheus in Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* is the true master of reality, for he turns all existence into poetry: *Gesang ist Dasein*—song is existence, a new creation has abolished the old. We are back to the doctrine of Novalis: *Dichten ist Zeugen*—poetry is creation.

I have already noted that where the magian ambition is strongest the poet tends to deny that what he is doing is 'literature' in the ordinary sense. This denial becomes most violent in Surrealism, a late birth of poetic modernity and in many ways its reduction to absurdity. André Breton's pamphlet *What is Surrealism?* (1936) defines the task as 'the transmutation of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, or surreality . . .' and he quotes Aragon: 'This surreality—a relation in which all notions are merged together—is the common horizon of religions, magics, poetry, intoxications.' Surrealism confessedly sets out to destroy the existing arts: 'The hordes of words which were literally unleashed and to which Dada and surrealism deliberately opened their doors . . . will penetrate the idiotic little towns of that literature which is still taught, and they will capture a fine number of turrets.' The background of Surrealism, as Breton crudely reveals, is the Nietzschean discovery that 'God is dead.' With this comes the feeling that ordinary reality has lost its value and become intolerable. But the alternative visions and revelations that Surrealism can offer have lost their metaphysical dimension and are reduced to senseless subjectivity. The drive towards 'inwardness' reaches here its final degradation: the romantic movement devours its offspring.

After modernity, what? One cannot escape the impression that poetic modernity, whose inmost impulse was the Magian Heresy, has come to an end. It does not seem possible to go further along this road when the futility of the enterprise has been so patently demonstrated.

For, whatever the value of what these poets achieved, they achieved it only in the course of failing in their real ambition. Meaning to conquer the Absolute, they instead opened up new regions of subjectivity. Aspiring through music to voice the inexpressible silence, they developed new subtleties and sonorities of verse. Trying to frame verbal spells which would be acts of new creation, they explored the obscure evocations of feeling and association which verbal images provide. Failing to replace the lost heritage of spiritual tradition, they expressed their sense of discord and estrangement in heart-piercing poetry.

Nevertheless we stand too near to this immense deviation to be able to judge it securely. We are too much involved in the

cultural dilemmas from which it arose. How much of this poetry will survive a less congenial scrutiny? If our minds were purged of all complicity in the illicit enterprises of poetic modernity would we still speak so easily of greatness in its regard? To what extent does the perversion of the poet into pseudo-prophet or pseudo-thaumaturge result in the production of pseudo-poetry? So much of the spirituality of these poets is parasitic: its pearls are paste imitations of authentic spirituality, its affirmations parody the true mysteries. Moreover, the attempt to identify poetry with anything in the supernatural order argues the absence of a due sense of the infinite distance that separates divine things from human things. To turn the *analogy* that exists between poetry and mysticism into an *identity* is possible only after the loss of any sense of proportion and reality.

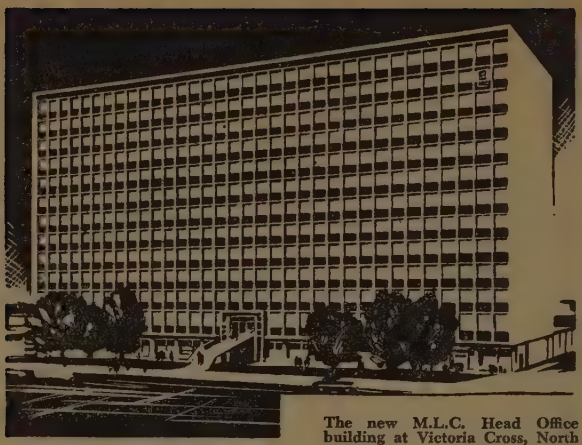
It is certainly true that to return to a normal conception of the nature and function of poetry after being infected with the Magian Heresy is a difficult task both for the poet and his audience. The beginning of recovery is to recognize that the magian ambition did not in fact bring poetry into a vaster domain but into a smaller and darker one. It is by lowering the transcendental pretensions of poetry that, strangely enough, its true greatness opens once more before us: we come out of the romantic-modernist labyrinth into the broad and high world of Virgil and Chaucer and Dante and Shakespeare, where the true proportions of things are recognized, and the presumption of man is corrected by the measures of the gods.

The way forward to a post-modern poetry cannot lie simply in a return behind the romantic deviation to the eighteenth century. The so-called classical formulae of the eighteenth century represent too great a narrowing of the spiritual resources on which it is necessary to draw. In any case we cannot act as if the intense experiences of the past one hundred and fifty years had never been; we cannot suppress and deny the voices of that period that continue to speak to us. It is necessary to understand what happened, to experience it deeply, to absorb and master its results, before one can pass beyond it.

James McAuley

At the bottom of every great error of mankind lies a great truth, a deep need of the human heart. Otherwise it would be inexplicable how whole generations, whole centuries, could be involved in that error.

Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838)



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LETTER FROM ITALY

Desmond O'Grady

ITALY'S South, like America's, is a problem and is colourful. As in America it provides the subject of many films, books and discussions. The South is a region of great influence nd interest and not solely because of such products as pizzas, a Pira, La Loren and La Lollo.

Some claim there are two Italies and that the South keeps the ndustrial North from enjoying a higher standard of living. Northerners accuse meridionals of being vulgar, lazy, sensual, ly and violent. The southerners answer by enumerating the lefects of the northerners, namely they have not fantasia, that 3 intelligence, they don't create, dream, love, they are not ospitable, their affective life is arid. The antipathy can influence ll aspects of Italian life: southerners say that the directors f the national football team are prejudiced against their players ence they don't select them; the fall of the monarchy, the ouse of Savoy, on 2 June 1946, was regarded as a triumph y the South; at the last administrative elections in Turin a ew party whose only programme was to drive the terroni, the outherners, from the city, polled thirty-four thousand votes.

A southerner might explain the history of his region thus: The South did not feel the effects of the French revolution; we lived under an aristocratic-feudal regime until the unification f Italy. Since then we have been exploited by the North. We were better off under feudal rule. Once one part of this was roken the rest became hateful and no one would propose we return to it, but I will explain what happened . . . the control f the land passed from the owners who were interested in their workers to absentee owners, bankers and merchants who sold us ut to the North. The other European nations were so far ahead f Italy when we united the northerners found it easier to xploit us—the safe internal market—than to compete. They nade sure the tax laws protected their products. They smashed ur home industries. They made us wander over the world earching for work. . . .'

The question arose ninety years ago when clerks and soldiers rom Piedmonte descended into the southern provinces liberated y Garibaldi. They carried their laws and habits into a feudal nd pastoral civilization. They were not welcome, these soldiers nd functionaries from the North, no more than the labourers

and farmers looking for factory jobs are welcomed today in Milan and Turin. Still the northerners had power so the opposition took the form of brigands in the country, isolation in the provincial towns and a suffused nostalgia for the Bourbons in the cities.

It is still a lively debate as to who suffered the most from unification for the North can picture their progress if they didn't have the weight of the South dragging them back while the South replies that the protectionism of the industrial North has depressed their agricultural economy. Southerners can document their recriminations because a reassessment of their position has been going on since the war ended. The Neapolitans' fight against the Germans was one of the proudest episodes of the Resistance and appeal was made to this when the Italians set about building their postwar democracy. The war brought such an upheaval that the peasants became conscious of their conditions and saw some hope of changing them. The intellectuals played an important part in this new awareness: they could not fail to see the plight of the people as they suffered it but they also saw some hope of effective action.

Rocco Scotellaro was one such. Born in 1923 he was a scholarship student at secondary school and university. After the war, as a socialist, he was elected mayor of his small town Tricarico. He took his job seriously and made the building of a hospital for the town one of his main objectives. His political enemies had him imprisoned on charges of which he was acquitted. In the meantime he had published some poems which attracted attention. He decided not to sit for a second term as mayor, despite the triumphal welcome on his return to Tricarico, but to devote himself entirely to the problems of the South. He studied further then; encouraged by the Bari publisher Laterza, he undertook an inquiry aiming to present a comprehensive picture of the peasant civilization of the South.

His method was to gather autobiographies of both men and women; if they could not write they would dictate to him. He limited his interventions to the strict minimum but asked the authors to write above all of the practical problems of their life: family budget, relations between members of the family, and finally social relations, the participation of the peasant in the life of the village and his attitude to the world beyond it. He had gathered only five of these autobiographical accounts when he died in 1953.

The interest they aroused on publication emphasized the untimeliness of Scotellaro's death.

Two Governmental measures designed to meet the South's problems have had qualified success. The Cassa del Mezzogiorno was instituted to decrease unemployment by financing public works. This is a considerable problem in a country where there are two million partially employed and another two million unemployed, of whom nearly a million have never found work, and who eat meat only once or twice a year. These sobering figures come from a sober Government report. The Cassa del Mezzogiorno, established to combat this problem, has been criticized because the houses and roads built have only created a temporary working class while not increasing the South's industrial potential or production. In addition there are charges of profiteering against the contractors. The second measure, the land reform programme, has been partially enacted with some unexpected results. As the peasants gain independence from their landowners they are less concerned about showing Communist sympathies. The Communists promise them they will secure more sweeping reforms. This is one reason the party gains more support in the peasant South than in the industrial North where the Socialists draw their strongest support.

The reawakening of the area cannot be appreciated in narrowly political terms. True political activity implies participation and this is impossible unless a people have, that is live, a culture. There is a new interest in their history, their great men—Aquinas, Palestrina and Croce are numbered amongst them—and their traditions. Southern narrative writing is vital at the moment with Domenica Rea possibly the most distinguished representative; Ignazio Silone's fame precedes this postwar development. These writers are strongly influenced by the great Sicilian realist Giovanni Verga.

There are not two Italies but one, richly varied as it is. The South is 'colourful'. This means that the people are poor, that their life retains concentration, dignity and weight because they are face to face with the realities of death, bread and the soil. There are divers ways of romanticizing this life. Most of these people would be glad to settle for a little less 'reality' and a little more money. But they want to earn it themselves or at least decide how to dispose of it. A group of modern houses built for the cave-dwellers of one district stands deserted. The people have returned to the caves which suit them better—for instance in the houses there was no provision for their mules.

Desmond O'Grady

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THE CINEMA'S TREATMENT OF RELIGION

Charles Higham

IN THE same year that Georges Méliès in France was stringing together his first 'set of illusions', a drama of extraordinary vastness was being enacted on a tennis court in Melbourne. Under the vigilant gaze of a Booth, Joseph Perry, member of the Salvation Army, prepared during 1899 an exposition of religion designed to illustrate a lecture on the early Christian martyrs; the pictures to be reeled at the rate of one frame to every forty words spoken. Perry assembled six hundred players, the costumes being prepared by the energetic pupils of the Army's girls' home in Murrumbeena. He showed the closing scenes of the life of Christ, 'and every incident of the final tragedy of Calvary presented with exactitude'. Afterwards followed the defiance of the Sanhedrin by St Stephen, and his stoning to death, 'and on the whole,' a spectator commented, 'it is not nice to see a martyrdom.' The life of Paul was then described; that brought us to Rome, where the stories of St Peter, Stephen, St Polycarp and Hippolytus (to mention a few names at random) were retold.

The spectacle caused an immediate sensation when displayed before four thousand people in the Melbourne Town Hall in 1900. Nothing had been seen like the panoply that spread before: Christ writhing on the cross, Stephen pounded with stones, Nero keeping his gardens alight with tarred and torched martyrs, women leaping into lime kilns in preference to the worship of Diana. The first religious film, the first feature film, the first spectacle film in the world had been born.

Paris was next after Murrumbeena in seizing on the possibilities of the kinematograph for the purveying of the world's most important dramas. Lumière in 1902 made a two-reel film of the Passion Play at Oberammergau; filmed theatre's ugly head was reared almost from the beginning. *The Merry Frolics of Satan* came later, and contemporary reports suggest that it was impious; Satan's agony was ignored. Zecca made *The Passion* for Pathé and considerably developed the genre with bold setpieces that had audiences amazed. A *Life of Christ* in colour marked yet another step forward, and *Jesus* with Jacques Guilhène, attracted the attention of ecclesiastics.

It had already begun to be felt within the churches that the religious film was no longer to be disregarded as a meretricious

time-waster for the masses. The bishops, sceptical of the precise motives of the producers, were alarmed by this invasion of their territory; commerce and piety had received in the hands of these movie magicians an unnervingly skilful admixture. Measures had to be taken, and complaints were brought to the attention of Pope Pius X. In 1913 he forbade the use of films for religious instruction throughout the Catholic world, and condemned the representation of scenes from any part of the Bible.

This publicity puff from so high a place stimulated the moving picture makers in Paris and California to further efforts. A new talent named David Wark Griffith made *Judith of Bethulia* the 'first fictional tale upon a theme of religious moment'. Kalem produced *From the Manger to the Cross* and in 1914 there was the immense *Christus* which until recent years was shown every year to Christians in the Far East—crowds are reported to have wept and groaned in its presence.

Shortly before the end of 1913 there appeared the first religious film in which a literary figure had a hand. This, startlingly enough, was Gabriele d'Annunzio, whose works appear on the Index Expurgatorius. *Not* surprisingly, the author of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* dwelt voluptuously in his screen play on the sufferings of the victims of the pagan world; he created immense scenes of carnage and sea battles on a scale undreamed of by history; the result—*Cabiria*—remains a monstrous effigy to his eccentric talent.

It was at this time that the career of Cecil B. de Mille was getting under way. De Mille saw at once the significance of the effect that the crude first religious films had had on the souls and pockets of the multitude. He decided to wed Artistry to Christianity: money must not be spared, and the exact sum of $302,976 was expended on the production of *Joan the Woman* (1916) in which some highlighted scenes were tinted by hand. De Mille made a vast profit; piety had paid off. Soon he felt the need of a screenwriter who could be relied upon to express his ideas on paper; characteristically, he declined to engage a well-known playwright or novelist, preferring to get a less trained, more pliable scenarist. His choice settled on Miss Jeanie Macpherson, whom a rival director had fired for shooting over schedule. When she came to him for a job he told her: 'Learn to do something you can do when you are eighty. Learn to write.' She learned—after a fashion—and became Cecil's screenwriter for more than two decades.

Thus assisted, de Mille confidently embarked on his most ambitious epic: *The Ten Commandments*. From beginning to end

it progresses with outrageous confidence; only in the breaking of the tablet by Moses (the commandments appear to be reduced to a kind of Hebraic shorthand) does it fail to inspire the necessary degree of awe. The Worship of the Golden Calf is an affair of splendid abandonment: couches being provided for naked limbs to romp upon, neither comfort nor joy were neglected. The camera moves somewhat jerkily for the most part, but there is constant movement within the frame to distract the eye. Keen spectators noticed, however, that when the followers of God occupied the sound stage, the technicians in the studio seem to have been so overwhelmed by reverence that they forgot to provide the maximum of cinematic skill.

The King of Kings is a great improvement. It was made with love by those who were concerned with it. H. B. Warner, the star, gave his all to the part of Jesus: he was instructed by his producer to remain chaste for the entire length of shooting, neither to drink nor take drugs, and behave in a manner befitting his sublime assignment. On screen, he radiates little more than backlighting, but in one respect Cecil's work on him had its result: he looks very starved, and his eyes in close-up appear strained. The picture of Christ that the film represents is the conventional Bible-in-Pictures one of the emaciated but starry-eyed shepherd; perhaps fortunately, Jeanie Macpherson and her master were out of their very considerable depth.

In 1933 de Mille made *The Sign of the Cross*, which reasserts itself today as his most rich entertainment. Based vaguely on Sienkiewicz's sadistic and topheavy *Quo Vadis* it is concerned with the love of a frail Christian girl (Elissa Landi) and a sturdy member of the guard (Frederick March). The Empress Poppaea Sabina (Claudette Colbert) becomes enamoured of March, and when she discovers his interest in the more tender charms of his devout playmate, joins with her husband Nero (Charles Laughton) in seeing that both are incised by lion's teeth.

Apart from the sickly episodes involving Landi, who appears, inevitably, in sacklike silks and a quivering halo of light, the whole film is a splendid pagan romp. Religion emerges badly by comparison with the worship of Nero, who enjoys himself hugely. Laughton plays him with deadly burlesque: the voice high-pitched and effeminate, the plump, infantile body prancing in its flimsy gold, the fingers, bedizened and worm-like, clawing for jewels or food. Here for once de Mille has relaxed and been himself; the greedy love of power, the cunning, the likeable abandon, are here exposed without restraint. De Mille has gone on making films about religion, and today has completed

a remake of *The Ten Commandments*. He has made some apt remarks on the set of this film; on the point of retirement, he has now come out into the open on his outsize, irresistible views. 'Man has made 32,600,000 laws, but has not yet improved on the ten commandments,' he says, thus giving an unexpected plug to his researcher's head for figures. 'Excepting the Book of Numbers, any fifty pages of the Bible is suitable material for a script. My pictures do not preach. I shoot for the drama and let the sermons fall where they may.'

In the strict sense, de Mille, like the much greater Griffith, cannot really be said to be a director of religious films at all. In all their panoply there is not one shred of even that kind of frenetic honesty which exists in the average Revivalist meeting. One has only to see de Mille in his personal appearance in *Sunset Boulevard* to have him summarized: no one could forget that hawk-like eye, that left eyebrow raised faintly in disdain, that sleepy but ruthless smile, that voice, with its blandishments and cold hint of steel. He has brought religion to more homes than any church in a comparable period; perhaps we should leave him with that thought, and its implications—nightmarish as they are. He is old now, and wise. And no breath of criticism can touch him.

Hollywood's attempts to make religious films of serious import have been rare. De Mille has shadowed his generation by making the genre his own. Walter Wanger's *Joan of Arc*, with Ingrid Bergman playing the saint, was an artistic and commercial disaster: over-serious for most audiences, it annoyed critics by its reduction of Joan's life to a series of stilted set-pieces. Nevertheless, there are individual scenes that are remarkable: the crowning of Charles is superbly staged, costumed and photographed and some of the battle scenes deserve to be remembered for their accuracy. The dialogue, drawn from the play by Maxwell Anderson, went so far to avoid the alternating jauntiness and sonority of Shaw's that it ended up as haughtily delivered fustian. The film has now been chopped for stock shots; sequences pop up in many B pictures (historical class).

Two religious biographies made by 20th-Fox in the 'forties have fared rather better at the box-office. Both had Catholic backgrounds: *The Keys of the Kingdom* was concerned with the life of a Scottish priest who became a missionary in China; *The Song of Bernadette*—based on Franz Werfel's novel—was an account of the Lourdes apparition. *The Keys of the Kingdom* had the misfortune to be directed by the late John M. Stahl, who shot the whole film in a series of boring, flat and uninspired

scenes. The only quality of the film (apart from its photographic merit) lay in its very sensible endeavour to make the pursuit of a vocation seem an intelligent thing; the priest was a normal, athletic young man, the nuns in the film practical, hard-working and level-headed. Audience response to the film indicated that many people who normally regarded the monastic life as being assumed only by fanatics or the sexually perverse were won over by this film to the conviction that a priest could very well be a healthy and thoughtful member of the community. In this important respect, *The Keys of the Kingdom* did a great service.

The Song of Bernadette goes a little further: it seeks to make sainthood acceptable to pagans, by investing it with glamour and mystery. Physically, the film is a very remarkable achievement. The 'feeling' of the village of Lourdes is faultlessly conveyed, as a visit to the spot soon proves. Unfortunately, atmosphere is soon dissipated by a formidable supporting cast of character actors, each doing a 'turn'. The cameraman, Arthur Miller, having proved in the opening shots what everyone in Hollywood already knew (namely, that he is a master of artificially simulated daylight) recklessly over-used lush lighting for every appearance of Bernadette, throwing everyone else (except members of the clerisy who are sympathetic towards her) into bleak and menacing shadow. The screenplay deals with reasonable fidelity with the progression of Bernadette's life, but falsifies the attitudes of her critics and ignores the very important matter of the fake Bernadettes who staked their claims to miraculous powers. There is a great deal of ripe talk about disease, and one of the churchmen develops a tumour especially so that the screenwriter can arrange for him to be 'cured'. There is also a ridiculous episode in which a frustrated old nun (played with acid relish by the redoubtable Gladys Cooper) tries to make mincemeat of Bernadette's claims. Despite all its faults, the film at least conveyed to many millions of people that saintliness is not incompatible with intelligence of a commonplace kind.

Subsequent assaults on religion by Hollywood have been less ambitious. *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St Mary's* were agreeable and sensible attempts to give everyday likeable qualities to priests and nuns. They rang up well at the box-office, and served a minor but valuable purpose. It has been left to England—in adapting the novels of Graham Greene—and France, which has produced a small group of unequivocal masterpieces, to explore the religious film in an intellectual way; the Scandinavian efforts in the field are usually of the poorest—only Carl Dreyer's

monumental *Day of Wrath* stands out from a large number of lushly banal 'mystical' films.

Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* and *The Heart of the Matter* are clever, sometimes penetrating, minor works concerned with the analysis of neurotic, worried people ill at ease in prayer, shaken in their faith, trying without much success to cope with each other's difficulties. The lovers in *The End of the Affair* are drab and pitiful, and are sparsely sketched against a background of damp suburban houses, a starved common, streets and yards grey with rain. In the film, this background is admirably built up by the director, Edward Dmytryk, and something of the dryness, the edgy veracity of Greene's prose does come through. But the miracle—the hero saved by the heroine's prayer after an air raid—is treated without conviction, so that the film remains aloof from the mind; unable to render Greene's highly improbable situation in the more practical terms of cinema, the director relies on Deborah Kerr's tearfully ecstatic face to do the work for him. It does not.

Much the same weakness—backgrounds dominating essentials—damaged the slightly more successful *Heart of the Matter*. This was a slipshod film, but Trevor Howard's tortured performance of Scobie was convincing, and the background sometimes fell away to allow him to come through as a human being. As in the other Greene film, it was instructive to consider the approach of a competent commercial director to the problem of religious agony in an individual: both Dmytryk and George More O'Ferrall seem unable to grasp that this demands more concentrated treatment than a situation in which a woman is torn between one man and another; huge close-ups are no good if the actor does not appear to suffer from more than toothache, and greasepaint simply will not do the work for the actor when he has forgotten (presuming that he knew) what it is to suffer.

The same fault, on a lower level, marked such films as *The Robe* and *Samson and Delilah* in which Victor Mature is called upon to suggest a simple mind's gradual comprehension of God. Everything is done to his face; angles, lighting, paint do their worst, but nothing can expunge that smug, complacent leer of fake piety.

In France it has long been understood that the greater the subject, the more must the actor be prepared to subject himself, to immolate himself in honour of the role. Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* contains exemplary examples of this method, and the director—away from home—was fortunate in having actors who knew what they must give up of themselves to portray

his conception of Joan, her accusers and executioners. Enormous praise has been expended on the film; there is, certainly, no doubt of its agonizing effect on a sensitive audience. The picture of Joan which Dreyer compelled his formerly glamorous star—Falconetti—to give was drawn in hard, deep lines of anguish and despair. Nothing was suggested of the toughness, the simple ecstasy and childlike fear of the Joan that Shaw pictured; historically speaking, it is not possible to imagine this frail, pitiful girl ever having led an army. Dreyer subjected the actress to such rigours that she was destroyed forever after. All talent was dredged out of her, she lost her looks and her money. What was lacking in the result was anything more than the impression of a nervous child of nature being reduced to wreckage by her examiners (all of whom were portrayed in great close-ups as vile, twisted with envy and rage). The light in Falconetti's eyes as she sees the cross, her affirmation of faith—these are done less well than when we are looking at her pain. Dreyer has created a cheerless film, which does nothing to suggest that Joan died in complete happiness; a master of the chilling detail, grimly in earnest when depicting—as in *Day of Wrath*—the oppressions of the bigoted and the self-deceived, he cannot manage the simple warmth and earnestness of a peasant girl. Goodness has escaped him; saintliness is quite beyond him.

Maurice Cloche's *Monsieur Vincent* came much nearer to success. Pierre Fresnay as St Vincent de Paul gave a performance which made comprehensible the essential simplicity which lay at the heart of this dialectician, this urbane economist. An atheist, Fresnay took on the part as an exercise, and proved that by reaching out intellectually to an understanding of St Vincent's way of life he could portray in explicit cinematic terms what a more emotional actor could not. Although it was undoubtedly an error of scripting and direction to make Vincent a humble figure moving self-deprecatingly through decade after decade, Fresnay manages to make it quite plain that Vincent knew a complete inner certainty; no tricks of lighting illuminate this thin, pale face with its ragged fringe of beard, but Fresnay creates from within a feeling of serenity which, even when he is ministering to the sick, never leaves him, and which his anguish at the affairs of France (the last great interview with the Queen Mother is acted with superb control) can never completely trouble. This is the cinema's only definitive portrait of sainthood.

At an even deeper level are the films of Robert Bresson, a director who has made only a handful of films. Bresson is without equal in the history of the cinema as a master of religious themes.

Les Anges du Péché astonishingly explores the convent of a Dominican Order founded by Father Lataste, whose chief work is the admission of women criminals to the life of a nun. The visual style of the film is austere in the extreme: the walls of the nunnery are whitewashed, and the figures in their grey habits move starkly against them; close-ups are rarely used, and always for a precise dramatic effect, as when the novice gradually begins to understand the full extent of the disciplines to which she is to be subjected.

In *The Diary of a Country Priest*, Bresson's masterpiece and the most complete development of a religious theme yet found in a film, the discipline and precision are even more marked. The setting—the whole film was photographed in Artois—is starkly apt: dusk-dimming hillslopes, cobbled houses huddling in a mist of rain, spiked trees, a chateau whose iron gates forbiddingly frame the young priest's arrivals and departures. The direction with minute concentration creates a visual equivalent of Bernanos' prose: the confession scene is held in complete blackness, the faces of the priest and the girl, white and anguished, float in the shadows; as the Curé de Torcy explains to the young priest what he is up against in his ignorant, disdainful flock, the camera explores the face of the actor so that each word seems to wound the soul of the human being we have before us; in this astounding performance, the words of Bernanos —'*prisonnier de la sainte agonie*'—are perfectly understood. The death of the priest at the end of the film has been led up to with slow, painstaking understanding and clarity: he is sitting in a chair in the room of a former friend who has now taken a mistress; he knows that he has done nothing to save his flock from its own evil, that he is dying of an incurable disease, that there is work to be done which he no longer has the strength to do. The camera begins to move almost imperceptibly towards a full close-up while at exactly the same infinitesimal pace the light from the window behind his head increases. Then he dissolves into the darkness, and as a white cross glimmers onto the screen the voice of his friend describes how he died, murmuring '*tout est grâce*'. In these moments, there is for the first time in the cinema a proper employment on a religious theme of its overwhelming power to disturb the psyche. It may never happen again for, heaped in its own material splendour, the cinema is perhaps the least equipped of the arts to convey what goes on in a mind praying, or a mind suffering from the absence of God. But it has happened once, and for that we should be grateful. *Charles Higham*

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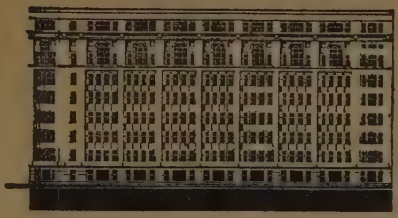

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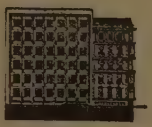

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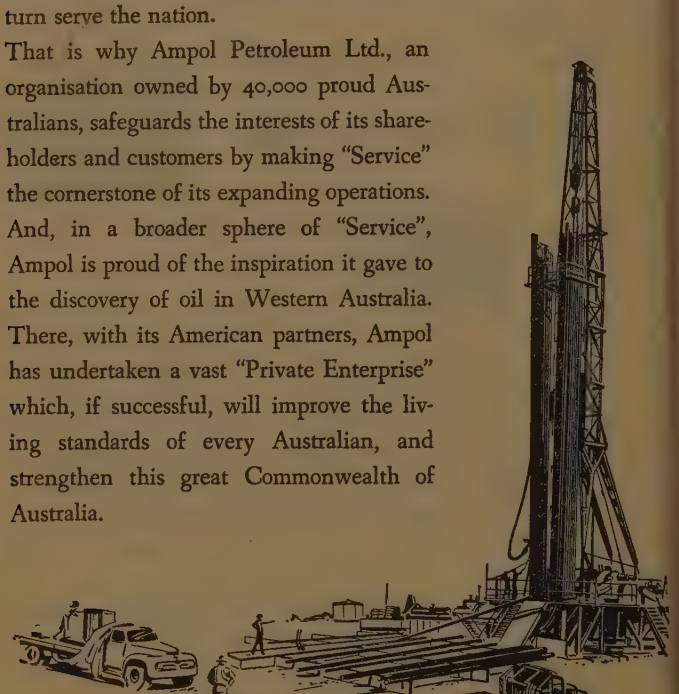


A. SOROKIN:
ds and Foibles in Modern Sociology and lated Sciences
nery. Chicago. $ 10.

Karl Pearson called for more ucational use of 'the study of lacy in concrete examples'. rokin's all-out offensive on modern nerican sociology is a wonderful urce-book for this study; it may that he supplies some of the raw terial in his own person, but at st the book is not like Pitkin's *rt History of Human Stupidity*, in ge part a mere addition to its own ject-matter. 'Fads and Foibles' is eed too feeble a term for such mes against rational thought as indicted in these pages; indeed, e perhaps the most pressing need mankind today is clear thinking ut human society, it is scarcely much to call these perversions of ntific method crimes against nanity: intellectual genocide, in long run possibly nearly as dly as Marxist orthodoxy.

One could quote endlessly from the ery of monsters; and even then okin displays only a selection n the weird fauna which lurk in junglier groves of American deme. It goes hard to pass over n inanities as the cautious dictum t 'perhaps' personal friends have e cordial personal relations with h other than with those who are their friends, but one specimen t suffice to quote in full, a formal nition from a treatise by G. K. f: '(*X*) is a movable mathematical nt in time-space, in reference to ch matter-energy moves in such way that a physical situation ts in which work is expended in r to preserve a physical system tinual as a whole but not con- al as to its parts) from a gravita- al and electro-magnetic equi- um with the rest of the universe.' owing Sorokin, I tried out this jack-pot question on my colleagues, most of whom said 'Good God!' It would be entertaining to define the Deity in this manner, but in fact this grotesquerie is meant to define an organism, and the point concealed in the verbiage is that organisms try to stay alive. But what happens to a living organism if it does get out of gravitational equilibrium with the universe is a nice point for speculation: I should think it would go places. . . .

Some of the analysis is superb and very legitimate polemic, notably perhaps the attack on the inept efforts to construct a 'social physics' by people whose equipment on the one side or the other is, to put it mildly, peculiar without being extensive. Sorokin wields both bludgeon and stiletto, but he is not always discriminating in his choice of victims, and the analysis is sometimes so subtle that it comes round and stabs him in the back. Such over-statement is perhaps all but unavoidable in demolition operations; much more serious is the incessant note of outraged personal vanity. Although in the preface Sorokin 'humbly confesses' that he himself is also one of these 'sinners', there is no hint of this humility in the text, and the author most frequently cited with favour is Pitirim A. Sorokin. This, unfortunately, enables the criminals to evade the charges by pleading misdirection of the jury.

There is, however, more than destructive criticism in the book; it contains a restatement of Sorokin's views on the major role of intuition and of *a priori* ratiocination on 'the royal road of a recreated sociology and psychology'. There is some eloquent metaphysics: 'Only the complete union with the ocean-God . . . can adequately convey the manifold infinity of the ocean' (pp. 287-88). True, abundantly true,

that the little world of correlations and chi-squares will never bring us to understanding of the ultimate 'mysteries' of which even Friedrich Engels wrote. But, with respect, this is not the task of modern sociology; its task is to analyse modern society. To criticize it for not coming to terms with the final mystery of the human soul is as futile as its claim—if it makes it—that it has the whole truth on the nature of man.

Sorokin quotes with great approval Godel: 'In contrast to the occidental enquirer whose steps are turned towards the "external world", it is within himself that the Hindu sets out for reality. He has been on his way for twenty-six centuries; and this gives him a real start on us. . . . Thus the Hindu, choosing the shortest road, the direct way, reached the finish of the race, while the occidental enquirer was lost in the mazes of cosmology' — and was, apparently, so benighted as still to believe in objective knowledge of an external world—phrases which 'lose their significance from a certain point of view'. Let us have a look at this orientalizing fad or foible.

To begin with 'the Hindu'—who is he? is not this as naive an abstraction as any of those Sorokin pillories? it means, let us say, the India summed up in the *Bhagavad Gita*—indisputably a noble and ennobling view of life. But there is another India—and without it Indian society could hardly have survived: the India of the *Panchatantra*, earthy, salty, worldly in the best sense of the word, full of (really) wise saws and ancient instances with no damned nonsense about consistency, since circumstances differ: empiricism *in excelsis*—and also excellent fun, and so all-embracing that one can imagine Machiavelli and Cobbett enjoying it together. It probably has more to do with the general habit of mind in India than all the metaphysics of all the seven or seventy schools of Indian thought.

But this citation (it runs in full to nearly four pages) must have a bearing on sociology, or there is no point in quoting it; and the emphasis on it would seem to imply that Hindu understanding of man and society is superior to our own; and this in turn should imply that Hindu society functions better than ours, is marked by more tolerance, more human decency, more love. Being a human society, it lacks none of these things; and by the same token it does not lack their opposites. There is a telling empiricist come-back to this metaphysical sublimation of the problem: 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' If 'the Hindu' really has come to understanding of ultimate reality, it is odd that the Indian social scene should still be a very human mess, or perhaps 'from a certain point of view' the external world of poverty and disease loses its significance. . . . But this cannot possibly be a sociological view. Making large allowance for the distortions induced by two centuries of alien rule, most thoughtful people who have lived there would not lightly agree that the crassly sensate world of the West is notably inferior—even in things of the spirit—by whatever common measure of human standards we can work out from the study of societies the world over. And indeed is not this working-out, this disinterested interest in the rationale of cultures other than our own, one of the glories of Western learning?

This perhaps goes far from the inept methodologies of the horde of the illustrious obscure who crowd Sorokin's earlier pages. But he himself would have it so. Wrong-headed as his own positive philosophy seems to be, it has at least the merit of making one rethink one's own ideas. The rest can only make one laugh, except when one reflects on the time, money, and—perhaps and times—talent squandered in these Laputan researches.

O. H. K. Spate

VAME NKRUMAH:
ana: The Autobiography of Kwame
crumah
ion. London. 21s.

The emergence of the Gold Coast independent Ghana gives rise to a nole range of speculation as to w it was achieved so quickly and aat its future policies will be. To a ry large extent the answers lie in e personality of Kwame Nkrumah no led Ghana to independence and no will control its destinies for the xt few years.

Nkrumah's story is the story of a an whose life has been dedicated to e cause of independence for the old Coast. Early in his life he felt e injustice of colonial rule and termined to fit himself to play an tive part in ending it. The student Achimota who worked his way rough college in the United States d England was no mere seeker er the truth; his approach to olarship was strictly utilitarian. nat can I discover that will equip to lead my country to inde-ndence? This was the sort of estion he continually asked him-f. He studied the great revolution-es not for their political philosophy t for their methods. Hence he can ite: 'Those who interested me most re Hannibal, Cromwell, Napoleon, nin, Mazzini, Gandhi, Mussolini d Hitler. I found much of value be gleaned and many ideas that re useful to me later in my own npaign against imperialism.' His erest in political parties was ilarly narrow. Republican and mocratic, Communist and Trot-ist, Labour and Conservative, all sed under his scrutiny to yield the rets of their organization. His ivities overseas were in line with studies. Always prominent in vements concerned with African dom, he reached the peak of his uence in London where he med the West African National retariat and became the leader a secret and select body known as 'The Circle', a revolutionary vanguard bound in personal loyalty to himself, consisting of those 'trained and engaged in political revolution as a profession'.

His chance to put his experience to the test came in 1947 when the UGCC invited him back to the Gold Coast to organize the nationalist movement. The old-fashioned nationalists of the UGCC, the 'lawyers and merchants', soon realized that this dynamic personality with his almost hypnotic power over a popular meeting was something more than they had bargained for. Nkrumah took politics to the masses and meeting them on their level made the nationalist cause theirs, which in the eyes of the UGCC was debasing. The inevitable break came and Nkrumah formed the Convention People's Party, a far cry from the UGCC. It was a party, not merely a vague movement; it had a nation-wide organization, it had its strict discipline, its organizers, its branches and its Youth and Women's Leagues. But it had more than that. It had dynamic leadership, slogans, popular meetings introduced by *Lead Kindly Light*, and all the paraphernalia of demagoguery. To show it meant business it had a plan of action: self-government was demanded 'now' and Gandhi's weapon of civil disobedience was the form of 'positive action' required.

This formula for the success of the new nationalism is admirably portrayed in the book, as is the subsequent story which reads like a triumphant march and with never a pause for doubt or reflection. This is hardly surprising, for Nkrumah is not an intellectual but an active politician. Indeed the main impression is of the superb political tactician he undoubtedly is. But one can search in vain for any central system of beliefs from which his politics flow. He denounced the Coussey Constitution, then accepted office under it; he ridiculed the

UGCC's 'self government as soon as possible', substituted 'self government now', then proceeded to work for it as soon as possible; he adopted Gandhi's non-co-operative civil disobedience, then co-operated with the British. Perhaps he is a 'Marxian Socialist' as he claims. His natural alliance with the left-wing critics of colonialism and his use of their arguments, his frankly revolutionary 'Circle' with its aim of a Union of Socialist Republics for Africa, all point that way. So too do his remarks in his Preface where he states that Ghana must develop under a Socialist system for the somewhat naive reason that capitalism is too 'complicated' for a young country. Yet in practice it is hard to see these beliefs being translated into action. Revolution gave way to 'positive action' of the Gandhi type, and there is little to indicate that any socialization is contemplated. Indeed, he speaks of his government's intention to assist African farmers and businessmen who sound very like capitalists.

This absence of consistent beliefs and ability to shed policies in the light of circumstance is in keeping with his utilitarian approach to the world of ideas. Beliefs were merely tools to be used in reaching the goal of independence. But what of the future now that this lone unifying element has disappeared? Is an unprincipled and pragmatic approach enough for instance to ensure the survival of parliamentary democracy? There is nothing to show that Nkrumah is more attached to this system than to any other and there is no long tradition of parliamentary government in Ghana. Nkrumah hints at possible deviations: 'But even a system based on social justice and a democratic constitution may need backing up, during the period following independence, by emergency measures of a totalitarian kind. Without discipline true freedom cannot survive.' This may be realistic, but what does the uncommitted Nkrumah mean by 'true freedom'? Viewed against the background of personal adulation, demagoguery, and slogans associated with the CPP the prospects for democracy do not seem very bright. But Nkrumah the politician is not the whole Nkrumah. No one could read this account of his life, particularly the early chapters, without being struck by the warmth of his personality. His lifelong friendships, his generosity, his capacity for enjoyment in company with his fellows and his undoubted charm give one some hope that after all Ghana is in safe hands.

John Miles

CHARLES PARKIN:
The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought
Cambridge University Press. 20s. 9d.

Professor Oakeshott once complained of E. H. Carr that whenever he visits Lenin's political theory he goes native; Mr Parkin in this exposition of Burke's political thought goes native with absolute abandon. It is therefore hard to see what the point of his book is. True, he does correct one or two not uncommon misunderstandings of Burke's views; and he does emphasize more strongly than has sometimes been done how Burke's political philosophy rests on religious and moral foundations. But, all the same, he introduces no striking novelties of interpretation. He is not at all analytical or critical: he attempts no reformulations, amendments or defences. I gather from his tone that he finds Burke crystal-clear and completely convincing, but I may be wrong: he never says. In short, he serves Burke neat, reproducing without discussion or explanation Burke's own fundamental conceptions and his own vocabulary. I should have thought that Burke needs a great deal of commentary, criticism and reformulation. It does seem strange that anyone should write a book of quite

this kind about Burke so late in the day. And why Burke? We should be surprised if anyone now published a straight exposition of Hobbes or Locke or Rousseau without exegesis or comment. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau are now in the hands of the historians and the textual scholars. Why Burke? There is, of course, a legend about Burke in England, as there is not about Hobbes or Locke. Burke is a deep man, a sage, not merely a sharp fellow like Hobbes, but someone who can inspire us, elevate us or ennoble us. He has all the qualifications to be the subject of a pious legend: he possesses the necessary combination of eloquence, moral fervour and obscurity: he is not unlike Carlyle. And the legend has recently been picked up by a group of neo-conservatives who find in him an authority to appeal to against the contemporary utopians, revolutionaries, planners, radicals and secularists. There are good reasons why he should now be in fashion: much that he said against the revolution of his time seems strangely applicable to the revolutions of ours: but what is surprising is that the revival should have led to the production of so little in the way of critical studies. He has had the ill-luck to be treated as a sacred cow, which is perhaps a worse fate than being left in obscurity. Neo-conservatism is very barren indeed if its exponents have no more resource (perhaps it is not unfair in this context to refer to the writings of Mr Russell Kirk) than to ask us to swallow Burke in his pristine form, in spite of the century and a half of not completely pointless philosophical analysis and social inquiry that separates him from us.

Even if there is in his work some political theory that matters still to us (as there may quite well be) most of it is certainly not there for the taking: one would have to work hard and skilfully to cut it adrift from the declamation and preaching that are his natural medium. Philosophically or theoretically, no man is more arrogant and high handed: more given to incantation, mystification and the oracular: more neglectful of elementary requirements of definition or identification of concepts, of exact argument, of testing generalizations by confrontation with social facts. And, while his books are full of shrewd observations concerning, for example, the ties which bind a society together, or the limits of political authority and political action, his political thinking is saturated (this incidentally is a feature of it which Mr Parkin's exposition brings out very forcefully indeed) by rationalistic, non-empirical and non-critical modes of argument which were still traditional when Burke wrote, but which have no force for most of us; and which would have to be detached and discarded before we could see what might still be living in his work. Like many another sage and metaphysician, Burke imagined himself to have privileged access to the cosmic and moral order established by divine providence and conformable to reason; and he thought he could confute both the methods and the goals of the revolutionaries by showing that both were destructive of the rationally supported moral order of the universe. This way of laying political foundations, and of justifying a preferred social order, is metaphysical lumber only, now only of historical interest. If there is anything in Burke's work that deserves to be studied still, it will have to be separated from this metaphysical foundation.

If we clear away the metaphysical props and stays, we are left with some questions that could turn out to be interesting. What in detail are the arguments Burke uses against revolution as a method of political change: what kinds of support can one give to arguments of that sort: and under what conditions would such

arguments apply? May it not be that revolutionary or utopian ideologies, although they may have the immediate consequences Burke asserts, have an historical function that he ignored and never investigated? Putting aside his lofty assertions about the moral order of the universe and about the moral nature of man, are there reasons of another kind that can be given to support his notion of the kind of political action which is conformable to political and moral wisdom? How in general can we argue for and against different 'styles' of political thinking and for and against different tactics of political change? These and many similar questions are constantly suggested by Burke's work. Some are clearly questions of logic; others, like that concerning the historical role of utopian ideologies, difficult questions of sociology. Burke himself was a sage, a politician and a controversialist; he was not a philosopher or a sociologist: we would not expect any serious discussion of such questions from him, although his work is defective (except as preaching) because of the lack of such discussion. They are all questions which have been discussed repeatedly since his time. It is astonishing that some of our neo-Burkeians, who wish to recommend him as a possible intellectual foundation for a contemporary conservative, anti-revolutionary or radical, political philosophy, should show no interest in these issues, all of which a century and a half of intellectual and social development have shown to be obviously important.

Mr Parkin's book will be a godsend to undergraduates who study the history of political philosophy; also no doubt (but perhaps it is mean to say this) to their lecturers. It is to be hoped Mr Parkin will be inspired to attempt something more important, a critical work in which he will try the experiment of seeing whether Burke can be brought down to earth, whether his principles can be given a plausible application to contemporary political conditions and issues. This is the only way of reviving Burke or of testing whether there is still much life in him. Mr Parkin here makes no attempt to bring him down to earth, and to do what he has done, viz., to go for a flight with him, is not very profitable for the rest of us here below.

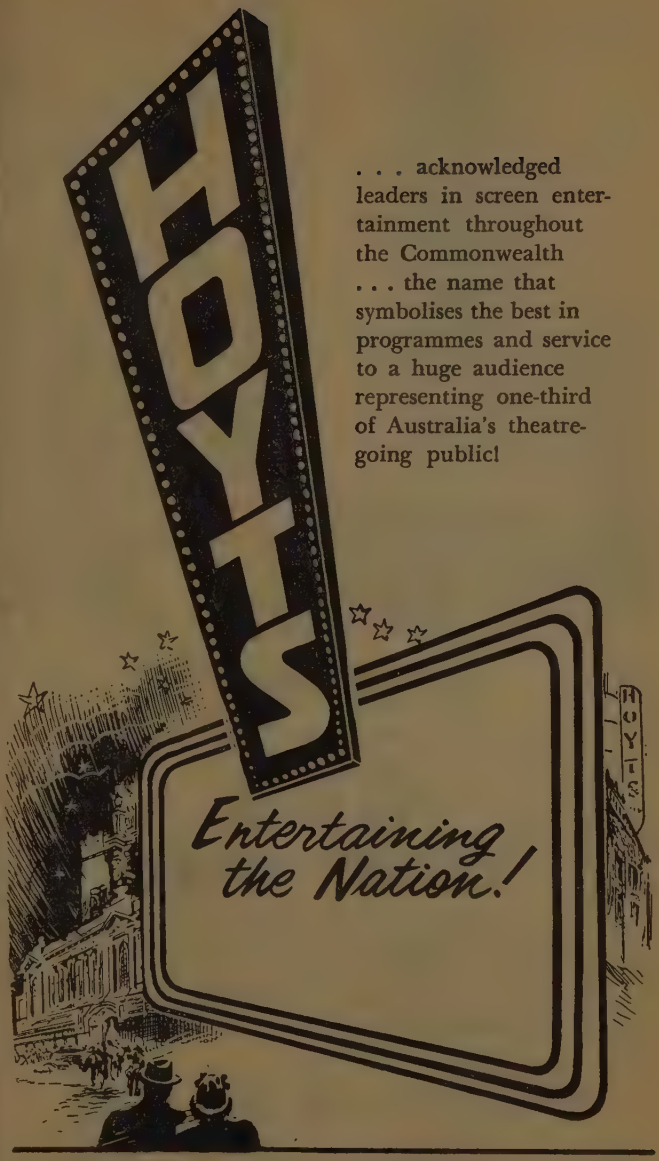
P.H. Partridge

HENRIETTA DRAKE-BROCKMAN
The Wicked and the Fair
Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 22s. 6d.

On 2 April 1629, Francisco Pelsaert, President of the Dutch fleet bound for Java, on his ship *Batavia* wrote in his journal: 'The assistant Zevanck, gone wilfully before the mast, caught a bird the shape of a very large pigeon, with a long bill and webbed feet. Although it was pink-flushed, with red tail quills, I am certain it is a type of tropic bird. This bird was killed to the distress of Lucretia Jansz, and Ariaen behaved once more in a very threatening manner. The bird was very beautiful. One does but rarely see such beauty.'

Henrietta Drake-Brockman's use of this incident to open her tale of the *Batavia's* shipwreck shows how the novelist, who has also enjoyed success as a playwright, skilfully expands her historical material to dramatic effect. As soon as the curtain rises the chief characters are brought into action which reveals both themselves and their relations to each other. A premonitory atmosphere of conflict and cruelty is created. The tempo, leisurely at first, quickens as the *Batavia* grounds on the Houtman Rocks, and the story is carried forward with zest till it ends fitly with the marooning of Loos and Pelgrom on the barren Australian coast.

History has already presented the author with a wealth—one might say a welter—of excitement and violence,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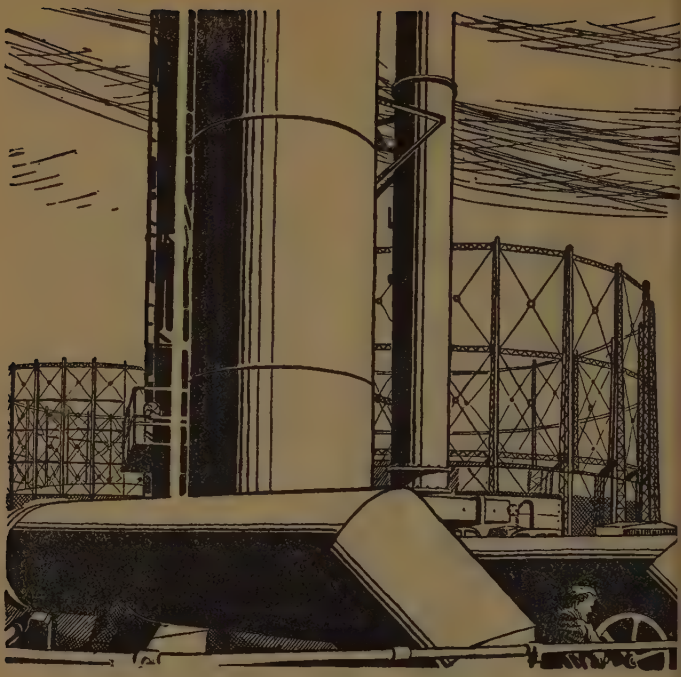

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which she handles graphically. Occasionally, however, she succumbs to the romantic lure offered almost irresistibly by the factual melodrama, and forces the note with romantic inflations which recall such earlier romances as *Sheba Lane* but which are out of key here. Touches of Wardour Street intrude on a prose which is otherwise sound and effective. One questions, too, the device of making Pelsaert and the beautiful Lucretia secretly in love with each other. This may help to unify the plot and provide motives. Yet it has no true historical warrant, it ends in anti-climax when the loves remain undeclared, and the story itself is so brimming with excitement that this imagined 'love interest' seems like gilding the lily. It lends some support, moreover, to the false impression created at the outset by the book's title and its dust jacket that we have here only a routine historical romance, artificial and contrived.

Actually *The Wicked and the Fair* is a genuine re-creation of the past, a vivid picture of its period and place firmly based on facts unearthed by years of thorough research. The characters come alive—as one might expect from a writer who gave solid characterization in such novels as *Younger Sons* and *The Fatal Days* and created one of the most vital figures in Australian drama in her Ma Bates. Thus Pelsaert, in particular, emerges as an interesting combination of nobility and weakness in a portrait fuller and more convincing than the ailing commander Douglas Stewart killed off unhistorically in his *Batavia* play *Shipwreck*. Lucretia, too, has her individuality, even if this is blurred at times by the romantic heroine. Cornelisz, the power-drunk undermerchant, presents an enigma solved adequately. The minor characters are drawn with vigour and add much to the richness of the story. *The Wicked and the Fair* is Drake-Brockman's strongest novel.

T. Inglis Moore

LIN YUTANG:
Lady Wu
Heinemann, London. 18s. 9d.

One of the more fruitful and happier consequences of the contact between East and West has been the emergence in recent years of Asian authors using English as a medium for creative writing inspired by their own culture. Very few Westerners will ever be able to turn to the original literature for information or fresh source material, and so the great treasure house of Chinese history, as rich in material for the novelist as for the historian, must remain largely locked and disused unless the Chinese themselves are prepared to give us the key. Mr Lin has now written an historical novel which is, as he says, 'a true story' based upon the historical records of the Empress Wu, who lived and reigned in the 7th century A.D. Writing in contemporary (perhaps often too contemporary) language, the author follows the two main sources, the Old and the New T'ang Histories, very closely, one might add uncritically; and even his narrator is not a fictional character, but one of the few T'ang princes, Li Shou-li, to survive the reign and usurpation of his formidable grandmother. Lin Yutang does not omit to cast well founded doubt upon the story that she was the grandmother, rather than the grandaunt of this prince, but elsewhere he accepts the official version of Wu Chao's reign without cavil. This version was prepared and finally published by historians of the period after the restoration of the T'ang dynasty and under the later, Sung dynasty. These historians wrote with a purpose, to hold up the story of the usurpation of a woman as an Awful Warning to future generations, and in this sense their story is a species of fiction, though based on carefully selected rearranged facts.

To determine how far such a picture corresponds with truth is the

task of the historian, not that of the novelist or dramatist. We are, in our own tradition, well aware that Shakespeare's Richard III is not the same figure to the modern research worker into fifteenth century English history. Just as some critics will prefer a rendering of Richard's story which is less tainted with Tudor propaganda, so it may be that Mr Lin has weakened his novel by a too faithful reliance upon hostile sources. The Empress becomes a more interesting character if her difficulties as well as her cruelties and crimes are revealed; her achievement gains dramatic value if the contrast between the hatred she inspired at Court and the loyalty she received from the mass of the people, the lower ranks of the civil service, and above all from the army were to be examined and explained.

It is not enough to elaborate the facts of her use of terror and delation to show why the only two minor revolts against her, although led by men of distinction and royal blood, fizzled out so feebly. Nor is the long and faithful service of such men as Ti Jen-chieh adequately explained by the theory that he was all the time working for her overthrow and the restoration of the T'ang. It is clearly shown in the histories themselves that he never concealed from her his belief in the rights of her own sons, the two surviving T'ang heirs. When a man of honesty and great integrity supports for years the reign and rule of an usurper—and a female usurper at that—it is clear that he found in her qualities which justified so violent a departure from the traditions in which he and his class had been brought up. This problem of the officer or official who remains loyal to the established institutions of government even when they have fallen into the hands of men whom he cannot approve has been frequently illustrated in the history of our own times, and it may well be that future generations will not always accept the judgments which we have passed upon them. One of the most interesting aspects of the story of the Empress Wu is the light it throws upon the psychology of men and women in such situations.

An aspect of the Empress's character which Mr Lin rather minimizes was her remarkable lack of interest in the fortunes of her own family, the Wu clan. In China, especially in that earlier age when the aristocratic clan was the dominant force in social and political life, it was truly amazing to find a woman who not only was not the instrument of her male relations but used them and cast them aside as her policy required. She claimed to be founding a new dynasty, but denied her Wu nephews' claims to the succession. This she bestowed upon her own sons who were the heirs of the T'ang, and who, she must have known perfectly well, would resume their true name the moment she yielded up power (as they did). The truth was that hers was a purely personal ambition, in the sense that she was not interested in who should rule after she was dead; impersonal, in the sense that she was only interested in the exercise of power, not in the forms and institutions in which it was normally enshrined. More than one passage in the works of her official historians reveal very clearly this total contempt for and indifference to the treasured conventions of the official mind.

The Empress Wu was much more than the Awful Warning; she was also much more than the strumpet which popular drama has immortalized, suffering the fate which Cleopatra foresaw, 'boyed in the posture of a whore' (for Chinese stage convention banned the actress just as did that of Shakespeare's age). Her persecution and purges of the great official clans, although undertaken to secure her own position, proved a major factor in the destruction of the old aristocratic

society, itself the real cause of the instability of the Throne and Empire during the previous four hundred years. Unwittingly in this respect, purposefully in the domain of sound administration, the Empress Wu was one of the main architects of the new Empire which began with the T'ang and lasted, with changes of dynasty only, until modern times.

Translation is tricky work; it is no doubt a helpful convention to give the Chinese months our month-names, but the lunar and solar calendars do not coincide, consequently the real date of the coup against the Empress in the beginning of A.D. 705 was 20 February, not 22 January.

C. P. FitzGerald

VANCE PALMER:
The Rainbow-Bird and Other Stories
Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 13s. 6d.

The publication of *The Rainbow-Bird*, a selection of Vance Palmer's short stories, is a literary event of some importance. For almost half a century Mr Palmer has been practising the craft of fiction—practising it, moreover, with a rare humility, and a fine sense of professional responsibility. While critics and authors have been asking where the Australian literary tradition is, writers such as this have been quietly creating it. Though his work may lack some of the elements necessary for greatness it is distinguished throughout by its integrity. He is an artist with a high respect for the materials in which he works, and I doubt if he has ever published anything which is badly or carelessly written. On first reading the stories in this collection one is struck most, perhaps, by the quality of the prose: it is clean, durable, workmanlike stuff, the sort of well-mannered writing in which every word pulls its weight and no word draws undue attention to itself. It never seems to stand between the reader and the story told.

The stories themselves are similarly impressive: they are without exception well-made. The last thing one could accuse them of is slickness, yet they are all firmly constructed and neatly rounded off: a craftsman's job. Occasionally the pattern is perhaps a little too precise, the conclusion a shade too pat. In *The Trap* and *The Birthday* the symbolism, though not at all forced, is obvious: the writer seems to have imposed a design on life rather than allowed one to emerge from the situation he is describing. It is stories such as these, too, which make one aware of the extent to which this writer relies on objects and forces in the natural world not only to symbolize the moods and themes of his work, but also to determine the way in which the human situations he takes as his subject develop. The titles of some of his novels and short stories are instructive: *Hurricane*, *Cyclone*, *Golconda*, *The Little Duck*, *Tobacco*, *The Foal*, *The Trap*, and *The Rainbow-Bird* itself. In the novels this use of something non-human, while sometimes effective (as in *Golconda*), seems often to be relied on by Mr Palmer to overcome his main weakness as a writer, his inability to create a complex dramatic situation which will develop some inner, cohesive life of its own. His novels tend to fall into vivid, disparate sketches—they need something like a mountain or a storm to hold them together.

What is a weakness in a novel is a positive strength in a short story. Mr Palmer possesses to a great degree the power of picking one particular incident out of the stream of events and using it to illuminate a life or a character. *Jettisoned*, one of the best stories in the book, manifests this ability very clearly: the parallel between the stranded timber-boat and the wreckage of Corkery's life is suggested but not stated, and the astringent irony of the situation is well brought out. The inanimate environment, however, still plays its

part: a storm throws up the timber in the first place, and Corkery is finally ruined as much by the deceptive shape of a tree as by his own suspicious nature.

The most memorable stories are those like *The Rainbow-Bird* which deal with childhood. *Mathieson's Wife*, the last and, I think, the best piece of work in the book, has for its subject the glancing impact of the world of adult love on an adolescent boy. The situation is a relatively complex one: it has more life and movement in it than most of the other stories, which tend to be passive and static. The prose itself ripples and flows, and a delightful air of springtime freshness blows through the whole story.

The Rainbow-Bird, though a small collection, is a very satisfying one. Professor Allan Edwards has contributed an illuminating preface, and there are two interesting appendices by Vance Palmer himself, his foreword to *Coast to Coast, 1944*, and a note on *Writing a Story*. Apart from some confusion in the numbering of the sections of the preface, the book is very pleasantly produced.

R. F. Brissenden

JESSICA HAWKE:
Follow My Dust!
Heinemann. London. 22s. 6d.

Subtitled 'a biography of Arthur Upfield', this book is credited in full to Jessica Hawke on the title page proper. But the dust jacket adds the words 'in collaboration with Arthur Upfield', and readers will not progress far before they realize that the literary partnership has been unusually thorough. It is often difficult, in fact, to regard this as other than a form of autobiography. Its tone, episodic and informal, is frequently that of a man reminiscing aloud; sometimes injecting a homily; sometimes switching his story about disconcertingly in time and place.

Upfield, who was born in England and left it at his father's request, is best known as the author of a highly original series of outback mystery novels in which the investigator is Detective Inspector Napoleon Bonaparte, a blue-eyed half-caste attached to the Queensland Police Department. It is surprising to learn that Upfield wrote his first mystery novel as long ago as 1926: his reputation, so perceptively fostered in America and England, has grown with undeserved slowness in this country; a point dealt with in the rather scrappy final pages of the book.

In a writer's biography or autobiography one looks for the elements of his creations, and this book is very obliging in that matter. Both in the body of the text, and in a foreword written in the well-rounded periods of 'Bony' himself, we are told that Upfield's model for his detective was a well-educated half-caste named Leon Wood, or Tracker Leon, who had been employed as a black tracker in Queensland and whom Upfield encountered at least twice during his long years of tramping round our fantastic inland.

It was the second encounter that decided Upfield to abandon the white detective he had projected and attempt a hero modelled on Tracker Leon, and it was a book left behind by the half-caste, Abbot's *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, that provided the new creation with the name he bears with such superb dignity.

The lonely iron hut, surrounded by red sand dunes, in which Upfield wrote his first adult book, bears a remarkable resemblance to George Barby's establishment in *Death of a Lake*; and throughout the present volume one can recognize backgrounds and incidents incorporated in the novels, including the astonishing Western Australian interlude when fact imitated fiction and one of Upfield's bush acquaintances disposed of three of his mates in a manner outlined in an early mystery, *The Sands of Windee*.

Roger Covell

HARLES CAUSLEY:
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GYÖRGY KAPOSY	a former member of the Hungarian Bar and officer of the Roy Hungarian Army, decorated for valour during the nation uprising against the Nazis in World War II, was imprisoned the Communists in 1949 until his release under Imre Nag regime in 1953. He subsequently took part in the nation revolution in October 1956 and escaped with his family. He President of the Australian and New Zealand branch of t Hungarian Freedom Fighters.
BRIAN JAMES	has published with Angus & Robertson two collections short stories, *Cookabundy Bridge*, and *The Bunyip of Barney's Elbo*
A. P. ELKIN	recently retired from the Chair of Anthropology at Sydn University. His published work includes many writings on t Australian Aborigines, including *The Australian Aborigines How To Understand Them* (Australasian Publishing Coy 195
JOHN MAYSTON BÉCHERVAISE	has led two wintering parties in the Antarctic and seve expeditions to remote parts of Australia.
JOHN DOUGLAS PRINGLE	until August this year editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald.*
J. E. HENRY	since 1952 Federal President of the Federated Clerks' Uni of Australia, was also a member of the NSW State Executi of the ALP until May 1956.
DESMOND O'GRADY	is an Australian who has recently been living in Italy.
CHARLES HIGHAM	an English poet and critic who now lives in Australia.

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The first of a series of booklets arising out of the Milan Conference of 1955 on "The Future of Freedom". Contributors include Raymond Aron, Colin Clark, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Edward Shils, Peter Wiles and Bertram D. Wolfe.

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